

THAT  
*My*  
**Great Duty,**

A N D

Comfortable Evidence

[ *Keeping our selves from our  
iniquity.* ]

Opened and applied in some SER-  
MONS upon *Psal.* 18. 23.

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By *John Whitlock* Minister of the  
Gospel in *Nottingham.*

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L O N D O N,  
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## The Epistle to the Reader.

Christian Reader,

**I**T is not any desire of appearing in Print, but meer opportunity that hath prevailed with me to publish the few following Sheets: For tho' I would not decline any thing that might tend to the honour of God, and the spiritual good of any; and tho' the Subject treated of, [viz. Mens finding out and keeping themselves from their iniquity] be a matter of great and constant importance, and that wherein much of the life of Religion, and the power of Godliness doth lye: yet this hath been so extollently and practically handled by the Reverend Dr. Bates, that I could hardly prevail with my self to give my consent to the publishing of these ~~Notes~~ but have been at length overcome by the solicitations of some, whom, I must confess, I was loath to deny, as being bound to honour them for their close walk with God, and Zeal to propagate the Kingdom of Christ, and the practice of real Holiness.

These Sermons as now printed, with very little Variation as to heads or expressions, were preached forty years since in publick, Anno 1657. and having occasion this year in a Lords-day course of

## The Epistle to the Reader.

*Sermons upon Isa. 53. to preach somewhat to the same effect upon those words, in the 6th verse of that Chapter [We have turned every one to his own way] I was desired to print, and have printed according to the Notes preached so long since, when I spoke more largely to the Subject than I did when I returned upon it this year. This is a true account of the occasion of these Sheets appearing thus in publick, which it was convenient thou shouldst be acquainted with. I shall add no more but my earnest prayers that God would make this Word profitable to my self, and all that shall read it; and to request thy prayers for me (whom God hath graciously brought almost to the close of my seventy third year) that God would be pleased more and more to fulfil to me that good Word of his Grace, that they that are planted in the House of the Lord, shall still bring forth fruit in Old Age, they shall be fat and flourishing, to the praise of the faithfulness and skill of God the blessed Husbandman, and of the fatness and virtue of Christ the true Vine. By such Christian remembrances of me at the Throne of Grace, thou wilt exceedingly oblige him who earnestly desires more Grace to approve himself while in this Tabernacle,*

*Nottingham  
Jan. 1. 1657.  
1698*

The faithful Servant  
of Christ and Souls,

JOHN WHITLOCK.

That Great Duty and comfortable  
Evidence [*Keeping our selves from  
our Iniquity.*]

Psalms 18. 23. *I was also upright before  
him, and I kept my self from mine ini-  
quity.*

**T**HIS Psalm is a Psalm of Thanksgiving,  
the occasion of which the Title of the  
Psalm acquaints us with, *viz.* the Lord's  
delivering of the Psalmist from the  
hands of all his Enemies, and from the hand of  
*Saul*. But I shall not spend time in looking back  
to the foregoing verses; but come immediately to  
the Text it self; wherein you have these two  
parts or things considerable. (1.) *David's* so-  
lemn and serious profession of his sincerity, *I was  
also upright before, or, with him.* (2.) The proof  
and evidence of this his sincerity, and *I kept my  
self from mine iniquity.* Briefly to open the  
words; [*I was also upright before him*] *i. e.* sin-  
cere in the bent of my heart, approving my heart to  
God, setting the Lord before me, carrying my self

in the habitual frame of my heart, and in the general course of my conversation, as under God's Eye: This being upright, is in the Scripture in several places stiled, being perfect, Gen. 17. 1. *Walk before me and be thou perfect*, or, as it is in the Margin, upright or sincere; so Job 1. 1, 8. & c. 2. v. 3. Job is said to be a perfect and upright man; the latter word explains the former. No meer man on Earth, is legally perfect, with a perfection of degrees; for legal perfection is full conformity to God, a sinless perfection; but every true Believer is Evangelically perfect, that is, upright and sincere, perfect with a perfection of parts, as a Child that hath all its faculties and members, is a perfect Child, tho' it be not arrived at its full growth and stature: Yea the Believer is perfect in his design and aim, breathing, and endeavouring after perfection, and shall at last, immediately after death, be made perfect in holiness. [*And I kept myself from mine iniquity*] i. e. I watched over my heart, observed my self, used all means of God's appointing to keep my self from sin. David doth not arrogate to himself, or ascribe his keeping himself from his iniquity to his own strength, either of Nature, or of Grace received; for he was very sensible and readily acknowledged, that he could not keep himself, but that it was God, his special Grace, and the continued and renewed Aids of his Spirit that could keep him from his iniquities, and enable him

him to walk uprightly before him ; that it was God in Christ : it was Jesus he looked to as the Author and finisher of his Faith, and all other Graces ; but he knew God works by means, and on men not as stocks or stones ; but they must use God's approved means to keep them ; and tho' they be passive in the turning act of Conversion, yet God then infuses a principle of spiritual life into them, and requires they should use the means, depending upon God, by Faith, Prayer, and Watchfulness, to make them effectual for the keeping them from their iniquities.

*From mine iniquities*] i. e. that special sin, which he found himself most prone to, and was most easily and frequently foiled and overcome by ; which by his constitution, condition of life, or temptation, he lay more peculiarly open to ; that which in his unregenerate state was his beloved sin, and after his Conversion might be his tyrannizing, and too often prevailing corruption. He might probably, in his distressed condition, when persecuted by *Saul*, be tempted to impatience, unbelief, lying, making haste, using indirect means, revenge, and the like, and he indeavoured to keep himself from these. The Doctrine is,

Doct. *It is the duty, of all that profess to be God's people, and an evidence of their sincerity,*

( 4 )

*to keep themselves from their special sins, those which they are most prone to, and may properly call their iniquities.*

Now for the handling of this Doctrine, I shall ( 1. ) Lay down several Propositions for the more clear opening of it ; ( 2. ) Shew wherein mens own iniquities do lye, and where men may search for them, so as to be able to find out what their special sins are : This I shall do somewhat towards in the Doctrinal part, but in the Application, more fully shew the signs of those sins, which are beloved sins in the ungodly, and too often tyrannizing sins, and prevailing corruptions even in the godly in whom they are not beloved or reigning lusts. ( 3. ) Shew what it is to keep mens selves from their iniquities. ( 4. ) Give the Reasons of the Doctrine. ( 5. ) Apply it.

( 1. ) To lay down some Propositions more fully and clearly to understand the Doctrine.

*Prop. I. Every sin that any person doth commit, is, and may properly be called, his own, as flowing from his own heart and nature, and his corrupt will and affections ; and he ought to lay it at his own door, to charge it upon himself, and not to put it off from himself, and lay the blame on others, either on Satan, or on Companions, alluring, persuading, or drawing him*



him to it; and least of all, should men dare (yea they should tremble at, and abhor the very thought of it, *viz.*) to father their sins on the infinitely good and holy God, and lay these Bastard-births of their own begetting at God's door: Yet this is that all men are ready to do, and they have learned this vile practice from our first Parents, *Gen. 3. 12, 13.* The Man lays the blame on the Woman, and the Woman on the Serpent; yea *Adam* in effect lays it upon God himself, when he says, *The Woman thou gavest me, she gave me, and I did eat. q. d.* If thou hadst not given me the Woman, and she persuaded me, I had not eaten: Therefore charge not thy sins on others persuading, alluring, or threatening of thee: They may be instruments and occasions of drawing thee to sin, but thy sins are thy own acts. Nay, lay not the blame of thy sins so much upon Satan, as on thy self: he may tempt and strongly suggest, but he cannot force; it is thou thy self that consentest to Satan's suggestions, and so the sin comes to be committed. But above all, take heed of charging thy sins upon God: he may permit, and doth order the sins of men, but he is by no means the Author of sin, *Jam. 1. 13.* *God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man;* no, it is thy own lust that draws thee aside, and entices thee, *v. 14.* Our sins are our own ways,

ways, *Iſa. 53. 6.* We have turned every one to his own way; ſo that in this reſpect, every ſin thou art guilty of, is thine Iniquity : but this is not the principal ſenſe intended in the Text, under the expreſſion of Mine Iniquity, tho' it be a true Senſe, and a great Truth, and therefore you are to keep your ſelves by Repentance, Prayer and Faith, and moſt vigorous endeavours from all Sins, aſthoſe which will be your own Iniquities if you commit them.

*Prop. II.* Original Corruption (that Body of Sin and Death, that every Son and Daughter of *Adam*, by ordinary generation brought into the World with them, and ſtill dwells in them) is, and may properly be called a Man's own Iniquity, By reaſon of this, there is in the Hearts and Natures of all meer Men, a Proneneſs to all kinds of Sin, and unto the moſt Heinous acts of them, tho' through preventing, reſtraining, and renewing Grace, they may be, and often are, kept from breaking out into outward acts. Original Corruption is the Seed and Root of all Actual Sin, of Thought, Word, and Deed, of Omiſſion, and Commiſſion, and of all the Iniquities that cleave to our Holy things. *Mat. 15. 19.* Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, False-witneſs, Blaſphemies.



*Blasphemie.* Original Sin is the Mother-Sin in every Man, the Fountain of all other Sins: Yea, it is alike in all, in the Root, tho' upon the fore-mentioned account, it is not alike in the Fruits.

And some would have this understood by this term *Mine Iniquity* in the Text: and the Doctrine is a great and certain Truth, in reference to this sin; it is certainly the Duty of all the People of God by Faith, Prayer, Watchfulness, and most vigorous endeavours to keep themselves from this Iniquity, at least, (tho' they cannot keep themselves wholly from its motions and actings, yet) from its Reign and Dominion, to keep it under, and to lay the Ax to this Root of sin: And this will be an Evidence of the sincerity of the Heart, and of the Truth, yea the Strength of Grace; and Men are never rightly Humbled for sin, nor do Mortifie it, till the Streams and Branches of sin lead us to the Fountain and Root, *sc.* this Original Corruption, so as to be Humbled for, and Mortifie that. But yet I think this is not the only Iniquity, or that chiefly intended in the Text. Therefore,

*Prop. III.* Tho' there be the Seeds of all sins in every Man, yet there is a Propensity in every Man and Woman, to some particular sins more than to others: There are in Men  
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some Master-Captain-Sins, which are as Lords Paramount, by which the Body of Sin doth exercise its Dominion and Reigning Power in the Unconverted, and its Tyranny even in the Godly : It is with the Body of Sin, as it is with the Natural Body, in that there is the Seed and Root of all Diseases, yea of Death it self, by reason of the different Humours in it, when any of them becomes excessively predominant, yet there are also some particular Diseases, which some are more prone to than others, according to the prevalency of some particular Humour, as some to Agues, Fevers, Plurishes, some to Dropsies, some to Palsies, Lethargies, Apoplexies, some to Consumptions, some to Stone, Gout, &c. so in reference to the Body of Sin, besides a general disposition to all sin, there are particular sins persons are more strongly inclined to, some to Gluttony, some to Drunkenness, and unclean Lusts, others to Anger, Wrath, Malice, Revenge, another to Covetousness, there is some predominant sin or other.

And as in a compleat perfect Man, there are all the Faculties, Senses, Members of a Man, yet some excel in one, some in another, some in quickness of Apprehension, some in solidity of Judgment, others in strength of Memory, others in strength of Body, or the quickness of the Senses : So in reference to sins ;  
all

all have the Seed of every sin in them; this Man of Sin hath all its Faculties, Senses, Members, but yet every one is more inclined to some particular sins, which may be more properly stiled our own Iniquities, our own way, and our doings, *Jer. 18. 11.* such sins as are compared to a Right Hand, a Right Eye, *Mat. 5. 29, 30.* Sins as near and dear to them, and that they are as unwilling to part with, as those Members in the Body: This Sin is stiled the weight that presses us down, and the Sin that easily besets men, which expressions as they may have respect to the Body of Sin, and natural evil Concupiscence, so they may have a special respect to, and be fitly said of that particular sin that men are most inclined to, and often, and most easily overtaken by, for this sin hath them at every turn, and besets them with the greatest advantage.

And upon account of these sins, which may more especially be called their Iniquities, we find particular persons branded in Scripture; as *Cain* for his Envy and Malice, the Causes of his Murdering his Brother *Abel*; *Pharaoh* for his Stubbornness, and Hardness of Heart; *Korah* and his Company for their Pride and Rebellion; *Balaam* for his coveting the Wages of Unrighteousness, (called *Jude ver. 11.* *the way of Cain, the Error of Balaam for re-ward*

*ward, and the gain-saying of Korah) Herod for his Uncleanness and Incest; Judas for Covetousness as his Master-sin; the Young Man in the Gospel for his Love of the World; and the other Herod, Acts 12. for his Pride.*

And that Men have their particular special sins, they are most inclined to, appears from the contrary, *viz.* the Nature of Grace in the Regenerate, for every true Believer hath the Seed of God within him, all the Graces of God's Spirit Seminally and Habitually; yet there are some Graces, in which some particular Saints are most eminent, and excel other Saints. *Abraham* is commended as eminent for Faith; *Joseph* for Chastity, *Moses* for Meekness, *Job* for Patience, *David* for Spiritual Affections, *Hezekiah* and *Josiah* for Zeal against sin, and for the Worship of God: Now all these had all the Graces of God's Holy Spirit Habitually in the principle of them; yet they did more particularly and eminently excel in those Graces, they are in the Word more especially commended for. And this may serve for the proof of this Proposition, That there is a propension in every Man to some sins more than to others, which *David* has a special respect to in the expression in the Text.

*Prop. IV.* As there are particular, special personal sins, men are (more inclined to, than to others, which may be truly call'd their Iniquities ; so there are also local and national sins ; sins that the People of some Nations, Churches and Places are peculiarly inclined to, more than to other sins, and more than other Nations and Churches are : Thus the Sins of the Old World were Ungodly Marriages, and violence, *Gen. 6. 2, 4, 13.* *Sodom's* special sins were Pride, fulness of Bread, Idleness, and filthy Fleshly Unnatural Lusts ; The *Jews* great sin was Idolatry and Murmuring, and at last Rejection and Crucifying of Christ ; *Babylon's* sin was Cruelty ; The *Athenians* sin was Curiosity, and affecting of Novelties, *Acts 17. 21.* The *Cretians* sins were Lying and Sloth, *Ti. 1. 12.* And there are sins of particular Churches ; *Ephesus's* sin was leaving her First Love, *Rev. 2. 4.* *Pergamus* and *Thyatira's* sins were Errors, Loose Doctrines and Practices ; *Sardis's* sin was having a Name to Live, and but a Name, being really Dead ; *Laodicea's* sin was Spiritual Pride and Lukewarmness. So the sin of *France* was Pride in Apparel, Inventing and Following of Fashions ; The sins of Southern hot Countries, as *Italy* are, Uncleanness and Revenge ; Of *Spain*, Pride of Spirit ; Of more Cold and Northern

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Countries Gluttony and Drunkenness, and also Uncleanness, as the fruits of those sins : And what shall I say are *England's* proper sins? Oh that there were not cause to fear and say, that *England* is even the Centre of all these sins; the very Sink whereinto all these sins have emptied themselves ! Are not the Pride in Garb and Spirit, of some Countries, the Uncleanness of others, the Gluttony and Drunkenness, the Atheism and Profaneness of others, all to be found overflowing our Land, as a Deluge ? Nay, are not the sins of the Churches of *Ephesus*, *Pergamus*, *Thyatira*, *Sardis* and *Laodicea*, to be found in our Churches ? Now it is our Duty, and will be the Evidence of our Sincerity, to keep from these our National and Church sins.

*Prop. V.* Both a Nations and Persons special prevailing sins may alter, and change, as their Age, and Condition, and particular Circumstances do alter. One sin may be a Man's special beloved, prevailing sin at one time, and in one Age and Condition, and another at another time : For as in the Body there may be a change in the Temper and Constitution of the Body, and thereupon an inclination to some Diseases at one time, and to others at another : So it may be, and often is, as to the Soul; namely, Pride, Prodigality, Intemperance in  
Meat

Meat and Drink, Uncleanneſs, Gaming, Haunting of, and Linking themſelves to, knots of looſe Companions, may be the beloved prevailing ſins of Perſons in their Youth, or riper Years ; and yet Covetouſneſs may be the ſpecial prevailing ſin of the ſame Perſon in his old Age. Thou may'ſt exchange one beloved luſt for another, and ſo ſtill have ſome beloved luſt that is properly thine iniquity : A ſin that may prove to be thy reigning ſin, may lye a long time hid, and thou at preſent feel little of the ſtirrings of it, but yet at length occaſions may come that may draw it out, and it may come to be thy prevailing corruption. Envy, Diſcontent, Impatience may be thy iniquities when thou art brought into a low condition, which it may be thou obſervedſt little of, while thou wert in an healthful or proſperous ſtate : And when thou art in a proſperous condition, rais'd in Power or Eſtate, Pride, Oppreſſion, Cruelty, Luxury, may be thy ſpecial ſins, which thou felt'eſt little of before : Thou may'ſt be ready to ſay as *Hazeael*, 2 *King*. 8. 13. *Is thy Servant a Dog ?* but ſaith the Prophet, *Thou ſhalt be King*, and thou little thinkeſt how cruel and tyrannical thou wilt be then. And ſo alſo a Nation's ſpecial ſins may alter : In times of Darkneſs and Ignorance, Superſtition and Idolatry may be the reigning ſins of a place : and in times of greater Light of the Goſpel, together with the

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ſpringing



springing up of the Grain, Weeds do oft put up,  
 and the Envious one sows Tares; and so Errors  
 in Doctrine, and the abounding of such may be  
 the reigning sin of a Nation or Church. In the  
 time of setting upon the work of Reformation  
 in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline or Manners,  
 the special sin of a People too often is unwilling-  
 ness to be reformed, and opposition to the work  
 of Reformation, and to the setting up the King-  
 dom of Christ; and the Lord grant that may  
 not be found to be the sin of our Nation. At one  
 time Persecution against the godly, and against  
 both the Form and Power of Godliness, may be  
 the sin of a Nation; at another time resting  
 in the Form of Godliness, and denying the Power  
 of it, and the increase of Divisions, Animosities,  
 Censoriousness, &c. may be the sin of Professors:  
 so that (you see) there may be a change of Nati-  
 ons and Person's special prevailing sins, & yet they  
 may have still some predominant sin, that may  
 truly be called their own iniquity: and it is the  
 duty of all that would prove themselves sincere,  
 to keep themselves unspotted from the present  
 prevailing sin, those that their own hearts, the  
 times and places, wherein they live, are most ad-  
 dicted to.

*Prop. VII.* The same Person or People may at  
 the same time have several prevailing reigning  
 sins, which may properly be called their peculiar  
 iniquities,



Iniquities; arising from different Causes, and the different Seats wherein Mens special sins are to be sought after, (of which I shall speak more afterwards.) There may be several prevailing Diseases at the same time in the Body, as Fever, Dropſie, Stone, &c. so there may be several beloved Lusts at the same time Reigning in the Heart, and breaking forth in the Life: As for instance; wantonness in one, fierce passions, or rash anger in another, may be their iniquity in regard of their natural Constitution; and then Pride, if the person be prosperous, or Envy and Discontent, Covetousness, Over-reaching, Over-doing in the World, so as to hinder himself in the publick, private or secret Duties of Religion, &c. if the person be mean and low, may be at the same time his iniquity in regard of his Condition and Calling in the World: So that tho' some particular sin may be most predominant, yet thou may'st have many reigning and beloved lusts, which if ever thou wouldst attain to evidence of sincerity, thou must abandon, and vigorously endeavour to keep clear from, even all of them.

*Prop. VII.* Tho' there is a proneness and inclination in all Men, even in the Regenerate, as well as Unregenerate, to some sins more than to others, which may be properly called their special sins; yet there is a great deal of difference in those

that may be called Mens own Iniquities, between them as they are in the Godly, and in the Ungodly; and therefore you must distinguish between a beloved Lust, a *Dalilah*, a Darling-Bosom-Sin, fully consented to, and a prevailing Tyrannizing Corruption, which a person may more easily and frequently be foiled by. Both may be called their peculiar Iniquities, as those they do most frequently fall into, yet in the Unregenerate it is a beloved Lust; in the Regenerate, it is tho' a Prevailing, yet but a Tyrannizing Corruption, and a continual Grief and Burden to him: Thus those sins that proceed much from the natural constitution, and other such like Causes, (of which I shall speak more afterwards) tho' they are beloved Lusts in the Ungodly, they may in the Godly be Infirmities, such as Unruly Passions, and the like, yet they are oftentimes fixed and continued Infirmities, that they may not get rid of while they live, and are usually more than meer Infirmities; they are mixt, have too much of the Will in them, and do proceed much from want of Watchfulness, and the Exercise of Grace, but are not beloved Lusts, the bent of the Heart, the Believers Prayers, Desires and Endeavours, are in some good measure set against them.

This distinction should be heeded, that Men may not pass a wrong Judgment on their  
Spiritual

**Spiritual State :** So that neither the Ungodly count their Sins only Infirmities or Tyrannizing Corruptions, when they are really Presumptuous Sins, Beloved Lusts: nor on the other hand, the truly Godly conclude a total want of Grace, because they feel the stirrings of, yea the prevalence of Tyrannizing Corruptions.

It is a certain Truth, Grace cannot consist with an intirely, heartily beloved Lust; yet it is as true, that it may consist with very strong Inclinations to some particular sins, which may often prevail over them, so as to fall into them, especially, as to the inward workings of Corruptions, as unruly Passions, Anger, Wrath, Frowardness, &c. tho' more seldom into the outward acts of gross sins: the sensual Appetite even of a Godly Person may be tickled, and at present pleased with some sin he is particularly inclined to, yet it is not a beloved Lust, if as soon as he doth discover it, and the present heat of the Temptation is over, he mourns over it, Watches, Prays, Believes, and with his most diligent endeavours, strives against it, and doth not make Provision for it. Thus Pride, Passion, Cowardly, Unbelieving fears, or Distrust may be a Godly Man's special sins, and yet not his beloved Lusts. Thus I have dispatched the first

General Head in seven Propositions, for the better understanding of the Doctrine,

II. The next General Head I propounded to speak to is *What things are the rise and seat of Mens special sins, where they are to be sought, so as to be found out, in order to the casting of them out, and then keeping from them*

I. Those sins which may properly be called Mens own Iniquities, are to be sought for, in the natural Constitutions and Tempers of their Bodies. Those sins which are beloved ones in the Unregenerate, and too often Tyrannizing ones in the Godly, do much proceed from the natural Temper and Constitution, for these do much incline Men to some particular sins more than to others: For tho' no Bodily Constitution be in it self sinful, but all sin doth originally rise in, and proceed from the Heart, *Mat. 15. 19.* yet the Body has an influence upon the Soul, and the Natural Constitution is sadly improved, and abused oftentimes by Corruption within, to carry the Man out to some particular sins, and these prove reigning sins in the Wicked, and very often such prevailing tyrannizing sins in those that are true Saints at bottom, that they often fall into, and are foiled by them, and are never quite

quite rid of them till they lay down the Body of Sin and Death they carry about them.

As for Instance, Those that are of a Sanguine Constitution, in whom Blood is predominant, are Hot and Moist; the sins such are most inclined to are Vanity and Levity, an Airiness of Spirit, Pride of Beauty or Apparel, affecting excessive Mirth and Jollity, Sensuality, Riot, Intemperance, loving Jovial Company, whereby they lye very open, and are easily drawn to Gluttony, Drunkonness, Gaming, Revelling, Wantonness, and Unclean and Fleehy Lusts; search whether your natural Temper doth not peculiarly incline you to some or other of these sins; and if you find it doth, it is your Duty in a peculiar manner, to Watch, Pray, and Believe against them peculiarly, as ever you would prove the uprightness of your Hearts.

Those that are of that Constitution, in which Phlegm is predominant, which is Cold and Moist, the sins such are most prone to, are Sloth, Idleness, love of Sleep, Drowsiness, Dulness and Heaviness at all times, especially at times of Worship, and in Duties of Religion; unwillingness to Work, carelessness in Business, Forgetfulness, Indisposeness to Learn and (that which is too often consequent to these sins) Lying, to excuse the faults that by their Laziness and Carelessness they have been guilty

of; and these are often the sins of Children and Servants.: Oh search, whether these, or some of them be not the sins that your Natural temper leads you to; and if they be, make Conscience of specially keeping your selves from these. Again, those that are of a Cholerick Constitution, in whom Choler that answers to Fire, prevails, which is hot and dry: The sins this temper doth more especially incline Men to, are Headiness, Rashness in undertaking, Violence, Fierceness of Spirit, Anger, Wrath, continual Brawling, striking, Quarrels, Contentions, Law-suits, being uneasie both with themselves, and others they converse with: O search whether these be not some of them, thy special sins, if thou findest that Choler have the predominancy in thy Constitution.

Those that are of a Melancholick temper, which is cold and dry of the temper of the Earth; the sins such are very much inclined to, are sadness of Spirit, affecting solitude, moroseness, fancifulness, musings, that they can give no account of, needless fears, jealousies and suspicions of all persons and things, as designing or designed against them, evil surmises, discontent, malice, revenge, ambition, and covetousness, through fears that they shall come to want; and many times sad and black suggestions against God and themselves, and motions to Blasphemy, Atheism, Despair. Now search



search whether your Natural temper doth not incline you to some of these sins, and fortifie against them, that they prove not your iniquities, either indulged and reigning sins, or prevailing and tyrannizing corruptions.

2. A second place or seat where men should seek for, and may probably find, their special sin, is the particular Callings and Employments they are of in the World: A man's special sin may lye in his management of his Worldly Calling, tho' he may not be apparently chargeable with sins of Temper or Constitution. There is no Calling, even the lawfullest, but has its snares, and temptations to some particular sins; no Mystery of men's Trades, but has some Mystery of Iniquity it lies open to, if God do not by his special powerful Grace keep men, and enable them to keep themselves from it. If one be a person of Learning, Parts, Gifts, a Scholar, yea a Minister; the sins such an one is in danger of having to be his iniquities, are Pride, Self-conceit, despising of others, curiosity, prying into the Divine Secrets, conversing about unnecessary things to shew his parts; affecting high Notions, and high-flown Expressions, being a Factour for Errours, crying up Reason in things above Natural Reason; or resting in the Notion of Divine Truths and mere Formality, without experience and practice of Religion,

Religion, and the power of Godliness: Such had need to see none of these be their sins, and keep themselves from them. If men be employed in the Law, the sins they peculiarly lye open to, are, patronizing Bad Causes, and encouraging men in them, and to go to Law: thro' carelessness or treachery betraying the Causes they are intrusted in, and requiring and exacting excessive Fees. You that are Lawyers, are none of these your sins? oh keep your selves from them.

A Physicians sins may be, so eying second Causes, as to neglect, and little to eye God the first Cause; making Experiments on men's Bodies and Lives; neglecting the Poor, not giving them their Advice, or not being so careful of them that cannot give them their Fees.

Art thou a Trades-man, Shop-keeper, Husbandman, or in any Publick Office, concerned about Money, buying or selling, or in any Trusts; the sins that are most likely to be your particular reigning or prevailing sins, are Exortion, Oppression, (as that was the *Publican's* sin) covetousness, greediness of gain by unlawful means, deceiving, over-reaching, false weights and measures, putting off bad Wares instead of, and at the price of good; taking the advantage of the ignorance, weakness, or necessity of the buyers or sellers; running into debt, and making no Conscience of paying debt,



debts, nor of promises and bargains; unfaithfulness in Trusts for others, or any other unjust ways of getting gain. These, and such like sins are in danger to be your iniquities, that have great dealings in the World: Search whether none of these be your special sins, and pray, believe, and endeavour to keep your selves from them all.

3. Men's special sins, that may be fitly called *their* iniquities, are to be sought for, and oft are to be found, in their Relations. Relative sins are oft men's special sins: Men and Women that may have many things very commendable in them, and not be much chargeable with any considerable iniquities as to their tempers, or callings and dealings in the World, yet may be greatly faulty in their Relations, and soil very much in the performance of Relative Duties. As if a Person be a Magistrate, his special sin may be timorousness, cowardly fear of displeasing Men, foolish pity, conniving at sin, and thereby encouraging it, when he should be punishing of it; or else partiality, taking of Bribes, easiness to be persuaded by Friends to do unjustly; or too much rigour and severity, or acting from prejudice, and particular spleen, and private revenge on the other hand. Those who stand in the Relation of Ministers, and Pastors to People, the iniquities that they are most in danger of, are carelessness and negligence

gence in their Studies or Preaching ; Preaching seldom, and only generally, not particularly or plainly, not pressing Truths practically, and suitably to the Cases of their People, Preaching to please, rather than to profit People, to tickle their Ears and Fancies, rather than to affect their Hearts, and reform their Lives : to shew their own parts, more than to edifie their hearers Souls, affecting words more than matter, and high notions or expressions above the capacity of the People ; neglecting personal instruction, not acquainting themselves with the spiritual estate of their Flock, nor watching over their Souls and Conversation, so as to admonish and warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak ; suffering the Ordinances of Christ to be defiled by promiscuous Administration of the Sacraments, neglect of Scripture-discipline, minding their worldly gain, more than gaining Souls to Christ : Covetousness, and too much involving themselves in Civil, and Worldly Affairs ; and not being affected with, nor endeavouring to experience and practise the Truths they deliver to others. It concerns Ministers to search, whether some of these be not their special iniquities, and to keep themselves from them.

And you Husbands, tho' in many things you may be commendable, yet if you do not love your Wives, walk with them as Men of knowledge,

ledge, do not honour them as the weaker Vessels, bearing with and covering their infirmities, but are bitter against them, that is your iniquity. You that are Wives; tho' you make an high profession, and have many commendable things in you, yet if you be imperious, self-willed, unquiet, cannot bring your hearts and practice to that necessary (tho' to the flesh, unpleasing) duty of reverencing your Husbands, and being in subjection to them as your Heads; this is your iniquity, which you must, as you would prove your sincerity, keep from.

Are you Parents? search whether cockering your Children, indulging them in sin, not restraining sin, or correcting them for it, suffering them to have their wills, feeding their lusts, be not your iniquity, hereby ruining of them both Soul and Body, both here, and to eternity: This is an iniquity which many godly Parents have, and are greatly guilty, and much under the power of. This was old *Eli's* sin, and one of *David's* iniquities in his carriage towards *Absalom*, *Amnon* and *Adonijah*. Or is not your iniquity, not bringing them up in the knowledge, nurture and admonition of the Lord; taking care for their Bodies to get Estates, and provide Portions for them, but no care to instruct them, to bring them to Ordinances, to press them to Duties, and to look after the Graces of God's Spirit, Faith, Repentance, new Obedience,

**Obedience, and to give them good Examples: Are not these, some of them, at least, your peculiar iniquities? Or are you not guilty on the other hand, of too much severity and provoking your Children to wrath, keeping them at too great a distance, not allowing them necessaries, or conveniencies, suitable to their condition, rank or age, and thereby making them weary of your Government, if not of your Lives, and tempting them to be more extravagant when they come to have Estates, or Power in their own hands; for your iniquities that are Parents may lye on this hand.**

**And you, Children, is it not, or hath it not been your iniquity, that you have been disobedient to Parents, not hearkning to their Instructions and Counsels, not following the Examples of Godly Parents, not reverencing them, yea not relieving and maintaining them when Old and Poor?**

**And you Masters or Mistresses, is not your iniquity too much severity and sharpness towards Servants, neglecting their Bodies, not providing necessaries for them, not allowing them due Food or Sleep; not teaching them the lawful honest Mysteries of their Callings; or however, taking no care for their Souls; exacting of them to work for you to the utmost, but taking no care to further their working out their own Salvation; giving them no time for Duty to God, Reading, Prayer, or any other publick**

publick Ordinances, or Family or Secret Duties; but working them so hard, keeping them up so late, raising them up so early to your work, that they have no time for Religious Duties, or else sleep at them, which in this case will be more your sin than theirs.

And you Servants, search whether your iniquities are not, or have not been, sloth, carelessness of your Master's or Mistresse's business, wastfulness as to Family Provisions, unfaithfulness or purloining; irreverence in your speeches and carriage, not governing your Tongues, but answering again, giving word for word, and sawciness in your speeches. O! all of you inquire, whether relative sins be not your prevailing; if not reigning iniquities, and if they be, be deeply humbled for them, and by Faith, Prayer, and Watchfulness, endeavour to keep your selves from them for the future.

4. Persons should search for their iniquities, in the various Estates and Conditions, whether high or low, of prosperity or adversity, they may by the Providence of God, be brought into. There are special sins that persons, through inward corruption, lye open to in their various conditions, whether prosperous or adverse.

In a prosperous state, when men abound in Riches or Honours, enjoy Health, and have all comfortable Accommodations about them, the

the sins that are likely to prove their reigning, or at least prevailing iniquities, are Pride, Security, *Psal.* 30. 6. Luxury, Unthankfulness for, Forgetfulness, and Non-improvement of Mercies, making them Fewel to their Lusts, Gluttony, Drunkenness, Uncleanliness, Oppression, despising of others, not strengthening the hands of the poor and needy, but laying out all on their backs and bellies, in superfluities and excesses, *Ezek.* 16. 49. when Riches flow in, setting their hearts upon them, *Psal.* 62. 10. 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. when men are rich in the world, they are ready to be high-minded, and to trust in uncertain Riches. Search whether some of these have not been (at least) thy prevailing corruptions, when thou hast been in a full and prosperous condition.

And if persons be in an afflicted, low condition, there are peculiar sins, that in such a condition persons are like to be tempted to, such as impatience under God's hand, discontent with their present condition, murmuring and repining against God, quarrelling with Men and Instruments, unbelief, and distrust of God's Providence and Promises, using indirect means to prevent or get out of Troubles, revenge upon Enemies, and the second Causes of their Afflictions; some of these were the particular iniquities *David* found himself strongly tempted to, when he was persecuted by *Saul*, and which he had

had a special Eye to, in the Text ; how was he foiled by unbelief, when he said, *All men were liars*, 1 Sam. 27. 1. and Psal. 116. 11. So when he changed his behaviour before, and afterward joyned with *Achish* ; yet through the Grace of God he kept himself from the reigning power of these his iniquities. Inquire whether these be not thy iniquities under affliction.

5. Men should seek, and oft may find out, what their particular reigning, or at least tyrannizing corruptions are, by looking into the several Ages of their Life ; for as every Constitution, Imployment, Relation and Condition hath its peculiar Sins and Temptations attending, and following it, as the shadow doth the body ; so every Age of Man's Life hath its peculiar sins. Not to instance much in Infancy and Childhood, tho' even for those sins we should be humbled all our days : How soon do Forwardness, Pride, Anger, Revenge, Self-will and Stubbornness, shew themselves in us ? and in Childhood, how apt are we to be taken only with trifles, given wholly to Sports and Plays, and unwilling to learn ? But especially in Youth, how do youthful lusts abound, which *Timothy* is warned to flee from ? 2 Tim. 2. 22. *Solomon* says, *Childhood and Youth are vanity*, which caused *David* to pray, *Remember not the sins of*  
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*of my Youth, Psal. 25. 7.* And *Job* complains  
 God made him possess the sins of his Youth,  
*Job 13. 26.* The sins this Age of Life is most  
 over-run with, are, Pride, Prodigality, Self-  
 conceit, Untractableness, turning a deaf Ear  
 to the Counsels of the Aged, and with *Rebo-  
 boam*, making Young Men their Counsellors,  
 not caring to advise with Aged, Experienced  
 Persons, but with green heads, raw and rash  
 Persons like themselves; thus Disobedience to  
 Parents, Masters, Mistresses, or other Superiours:  
 Inordinate love of Pleasures and Recreations,  
 and of Bad Company, of Gluttonous, Drun-  
 ken, Gaming, Wanton Persons, and so being  
 drawn to these sins, spending their Time in  
 Drinking-houses, and their Time and Estates  
 in Gaming, and hereby being drawn to  
 Swearing, Sabbath-profanation and scorning of  
 Godliness: Such dirty ways is Youth in-  
 clined to, and too commonly defiled with,  
*Psal. 119. 9.* O you, Young Men and Wo-  
 men, see whether some of these be not your  
 beloved Lusts, or, if you have some Grace,  
 whether they be not domineering corruptions  
 in you, and let it be your cares, as you  
 would evidence your Sincerity, to keep your  
 selves from these youthful Lusts. Art thou  
 come to riper Years, to strength of Body and  
 Mind, the prevailing iniquities of this Age  
 are, usually, greediness of Gain, Earthly-  
 mindedness,



mindfulness, resolving to be rich by right or wrong, Pride, Ambition, aspiring after Places of Profit, Power and Honour; suffering covetous ambitious Designs to swallow up their time and hearts, so as to neglect Heaven and heavenly things, their own Souls, and the Souls of others, the Duties of Divine Worship, Publick, Private, Secret, and Inward heart-duties, and other duties they owe to God, and both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and those more peculiarly, that are under their Charge. You that are in this Age, are none of these your iniquities?

Are you come to Old Age, there are ~~for~~ that beset that Age, viz. Moroseness, Earthly-mindedness, even tho' they have one foot in the Grave, suspicions, peevishness, expecting too much from others, (tho' its true, a great deal be due from Inferiours to them) too much imperiousness, and imposing on younger Persons; not being able to bear the Innocent harmess, Sober and Modest, freedom and cheerfulness of Young Persons, but expecting such should have as much gravity and as little cheerfulness as Aged Persons. Such of us as are arrived to Old Age, search whether some of these be not our iniquities, and if they be, be we humbled for them, and look we up to God for his Grace to inable us to keep our selves from them.

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6. Persons

6. Persons own iniquities, may be the sins of the Times and Places wherein Persons live; sins that Men have contracted by the Examples, or Traditions of their Fathers by the power and influence of Education, the company they have most conversed with: Great is the power these things have to incline Men to such sins more than others, and to rivet them in corrupt Principles and Practices in Doctrine, Worship, Manners and Conversation, so that Men are very hardly brought off from them. You may probably find your prevailing iniquities, if you consider what are the most common sins of the Times and Places you live in. When Pride, Vanity, Looseness, Profaneness, Errour, Divisions, are the common sins of the Times, you will be in a great deal of danger, to be carried down the Stream. Are not your special sins such as you have been drawn into by the Examples of Great Men, at least of some Superiours, as Ministers, Parents, Masters? The vain Conversation Men have received by Tradition from their Fathers, there needs the Blood of Christ, and the Power and Grace of the Spirit to redeem Men from, *1 Pet. i. 18*. Men are ready to say, This was the Religion, this the Practice of our Fathers, and are we wiser or better than they? So sins Men have been educated and brought up in, they are apt to make

make their own. If Persons have lived in ungodly Families, where Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleanneſs, Gaming, Sabbath-breaking, have been ordinarily practiſed, and reading the Scriptures, Family-prayer, and Inſtruction have been neglected, when they come to have Families of their own, theſe are like to be their reigning ſins, if God do not beſtow upon, and work in them renewing ſanctifying Grace; ſuch will be ready to ſay, My Parents, or Maſters I lived with, did ſo and ſo, and neglected theſe Duties, and why ſhould I be ſingular? And ſo the ſins of thy Companions are like to be thine. If thou chuſeſt and delighteſt in looſe, profane, riotous, wanton, tripling company, thou art like to be looſe, profane and wanton thy ſelf, and to be drawn into the ſame ſins that thy companions, thou out of choice, and delightfully converſeſt with, are guilty of. Search therefore whether the ſins of the times and places, thou haſt lived in, the ſins thou haſt been led to by education, example, or thy companions, be not the ſins thou haſt made properly thy own Iniquities; and Pray and Labour that by Grace thou may'ſt be inabled to keep thy ſelf from them.

VII. Mens own proper ſins that may be moſt prevailing over them, may lye and be found in the undue, immoderate, unſeaſonable, and uncharitable uſe of lawful and indifferent things,

things, as in the use of Meat, Drink, Apparel, Sleep, lawful Recreations: Your reigning or prevailing Iniquity may lye in an immoderate and unseasonable use of these: The use of these is lawful, yea necessary, yet men that cannot be charged with scandalous sins, may be greatly guilty of excess in these, in Meats, in indulging and pleasing their Palate and Sensual Appetite, in too great variety and costliness, (tho' not in quantity) so as to neglect to feed the Hungry: So in Drink, there may be excesses short of Drunkenness: In Apparel, in its costliness, gawdiness, strange fashions, neglecting to cloath the Naked: So in indulging excessive and unseasonable Sleep: And in Recreations that are in themselves lawful, Men sin, if they take up and devour too much of their time and strength, if their Heart be set upon them, wast their Estate, hinder the duties of their general or particular Calling, taking up the time that should be spent, either in publick Worship, or Family, or Secret Religion, such as secret Reading, Prayer, Meditation, Self-reflection. In such cases and circumstances, even lawful things (in themselves considered) may prove Iniquities, and thy reigning Iniquities.

So Mens special sins may lye in undue uncharitable use of things indifferent, (or that men account and call so) thereby to grieve the

the Godly, or draw others into sin by their example, an undue use of Christian, (or pretended Christian) Liberty, *to the wounding of the Consciences of weak Brethren*. Men may contract guilt in the use of such things, when they use them uncharitably, not caring, if they satisfy themselves, who they dissatisfie, grieve, or offend: So uncharitable censuring of others that are satisfied to do some things that thou art not satisfied about; which is often the prevailing sin of weak Christians: Or on the other hand imposing on others in Religion, that which *they* acknowledge to be indifferent, and *others* judge not lawful for *themselves* at least to do; despising those as weak, who cannot be satisfied to do that which they do, especially to make such things terms of Communion. See whether none of these be your Iniquities, and keep your selves from them; these sins the Apostle warns against, *Rom. 14. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c.*

VIII. Mens special sins, that may in a proper sense be stiled their Iniquities, may be gathered and found out from the consideration of the different spiritual estates of persons both before and after their Conversion. There are many sins that are the beloved reigning sins of Men in their Unconverted, Unregenerate state, and there are peculiar sins, that tho' they are not beloved reigning sins, yet are

prove too prevalent ones after Regeneration in the Godly, according as they are younger Converts, and more weak and doubting Christians, or stronger and more ancient Christians.

Before Conversion, the special reigning sins of persons may be different, according as they may be differently ranked into either the Ignorant, or the profane, or merely civil, morally just and honest person, or the formal Professor and Hypocrite.

The Ignorant person that continues such under the means of Knowledge and Grace, his special and reigning Iniquity, is wilful and affected Ignorance, resting contented in it, without using the means to come to Knowledge, which he may enjoy, and are tendered to him: He will not submit to the instructions of Ministers, Parents, or Christian Friends, and that either from Pride, or resting in his good meaning, thinking and saying, his Heart, and his Intentions are as good as any, tho' the Heart cannot be good where there is not a competent measure of knowledge, of the necessary principles and duties of Religion, and of the nature of the Graces of the Spirit. Is not this the sin of many among us?

And as to the profane, loose, debauched person, that goes on in his wicked course of Drunkenness, Uncleanness, Swearing, Sabbath-breaking,



breaking, and keeping wretched company, his own peculiar reigning sin is carnal Security and Presumption, and that either presuming on the mercy of God and Merits of Christ in general, without Faith, applying, laying hold of, and resting upon the Grace of God and Merit of Christ, and without Repentance, and turning from Sin to God, thereby evidencing the truth of their Faith; Mens blessing themselves and saying in their Hearts, they shall have Peace, tho' they walk in the Imagination of their own Heart, and add Drunkenness to Thirst, *Deut. 29. 19.* Or else presuming and promising themselves, that they can, and will Believe and Repent hereafter, before they dye. Are not these, O thou profane sinner, thy beloved, reigning sins, which will prove damning ones, unless thou be delivered, and inabled to keep from them?

The meersly civil, or morally just and honest person in his dealings with Men, he that is free from Debauchery, and open acts of Profaneness, and is just, yea it may be Charitable also, a good Common-wealths-man, a good Neighbour, these are all highly commendable Qualifications, yea necessary duties, inseparable from true Faith and Repentance, and signs of true conversion, when proceeding from, and accompanied with those Graces, and Love to, and Fear of God, and Heart and Life-Holiness:



Holiness : But yet Men may be civilly just, charitable, useful in their places, and be still in an unconverted state : Now the special beloved, reigning sins of such as these are, resting in these as their justifying righteousness, being ready to say as the *Pharisee*, Luk. 18. 11, 12. *I am not as other men are*, &c. and taking up with these instead of true conversion, and a saving work of Grace, without Faith, Repentance, Love to God, and New Obedience, and keeping up Communion with God in the Duties of Religion. See whether these be not your Iniquities and Reigning sins, and if they have been, or be, Pray, Believe, and endeavour to be delivered and kept from them.

And as to the formal Professor, he may not only be Civil, but also much in Duties of Religion, make an high Profession, be a Baptized person, Hear, Read, Pray, perform Family and Secret Duties, receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, join in full Communion with the True and Best Reformed Churches of Christ, and yet be in an Unconverted state: Now the reigning sin of such persons, which is *their* Iniquity, is, resting in a form of Godliness, without the power and practice of it, suitable to their profession; separating duties of Piety from duties of Justice and Charity; performing some first table duties, but neglecting

lecting those of the second Table, which God has joined, and which in conjunction the Grace of God in the Gospel doth teach and require, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* Is this the sin of none of you? If it be a beloved reigning sin in you, it will ruin you as surely as open profaneness, and the neglect of the duties of Piety. Pray and Believe that you may be delivered and kept from this being your Iniquity.

And as to the close Hypocrite, who may deceive himself as well as others, who may have much Knowledge, great Gifts in Prayer, and speaking of the things of God, yea, (if a Minister) in preaching, opening and confirming the Truth, and confuting Error; and may have experienced all the common works of the Spirit, such as Illumination, Convictions, legal Terrors, and legal Humiliation, partial Reformation, and flashy, stony-ground Affections; a person having all these, may yet be in an Unconverted state: Now the special reigning sin of such, is, Pride in, and Boasting of their Gifts, or resting in Knowledge and Gifts without Grace, taking up with the common works of the Spirit before mentioned, instead of a thorough change and sound Conversion.

And as to persons Converted, there are sins which may be called *their* Iniquities, which  
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tho' they are not beloved and reigning ones, yet may be very prevailing in them, so as that they may frequently fall into, and be foiled by them; and these may be considered according to their lower or higher standing in Christ, whether as Young Converts, and Weak Christians, or as Stronger, more Ancient, and of longer standing in Christ.

As to Young Converts, or Weaker Christians, the sins that are like to prove *their* Iniquities, are unsettledness and fickleness in Judgment, being taken with Novelties, tossed to and fro, being led by Affection more than Judgment; indiscreet zeal, without knowledge and spiritual prudence to poize and regulate it; Suffering the duties of their general and particular Calling to interfere and hinder one another; scrupulousness and uncharitable censuring of others, pride of duties, gifts, enlargements, and trusting in them too much. And in Weak, Doubting Christians, indulging doubts and fears, listening to Satan, entertaining hard thoughts of God, refusing the comforts the Word of God holds forth. Are none of these your prevailing Corruptions, (tho' not your beloved ones) but if they be prevailing ones, they are very Dishonourable to God, uncomfortable, and prejudicial both to your selves and others. Pray you may be kept, and endeavour to keep your selves from them. And

And as to Stronger and more Ancient Christians, the sins that they are in danger to be beset with as their peculiar sins, are, too much rigidity towards young beginners, expecting too much from them, as much Knowledge and Prudence as they themselves, or other Ancient Christians have, not bearing with their Infirmities, want of Pity and Compassion towards such as are under Doubts and Fears ; which may provoke God to cause even strong Christians some time or other to feel them, that they may learn more to pity such weak, doubting, tempted, deserted, but good Souls for ever after.

Again, another special sin of Stronger Christians, or those that think themselves so, is, using, or indeed abusing Christian Liberty by going to the utmost extent of it, to the offence of others, grieving some, and wounding the Consciences of others, occasioning them to sin by their example, not caring, if they do but satisfy themselves, how much others may be dissatisfied, grieved, offended, and damaged. Yea Worldliness is an iniquity that is very apt to seize and grow upon Ancient Professors, as also Spiritual Sloth and Slumber, Deadness of Affections, Dulness and Drowsiness of Soul in Holy Duties, decays of Grace, loss of First Love, and of former Zeal and Fervour. You stronger and more ancient  
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Christians, search whether some or other of these be not your Iniquities, which tho' they be not allow'd, or reigning sins, yet oft and very far prevail over you.

IX. Those Sins which may properly be called Mens own Iniquities, may oft be found in or about the Duties they should or do perform: In regard either of the Omissions of Duties and Ordinances, or Carelessness in the performance of them. The sins of our Holy things may prove our special sins: Sins of Omission may be, oft are, reigning sins in the Ungodly, and partial Omissions are too much prevailing Iniquities in the Godly. It may be thou art not guilty of outward acts of gross sins, of Impiety, Injustice, Intemperance, but yet thou livest in the neglect of Gods publick Ordinances, the Word, Prayer, and the Sacrament (I mean resting content in such a state that thou hast neither right to, nor fitness for that Holy Sealing Ordinance) so living in the neglect of Family-Duties, of Reading, Prayer, Catechizing, or omitting Secret Duties; these Omissions, if allowed and continued in, against Knowledge and Convictions, they are thine, yea thy reigning Iniquities.

And you that have true Grace, your omission of Duties through carelessness, tho' they be not beloved Lusts, yet they are strong Corruptions in you, when a little thing, an ordinary

ordinary business, will cause you to omit Duties, put you by the attending on week-day opportunities of hearing the Word, (when you might without prejudice order it otherways) or put you by your Family or Secret Duties. Yea it is your iniquity a prevailing sin in you, who have a right to, and fitness for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, if you suffer worldly business so to inroach upon your time and hearts, that you frequently omit joyning in that Ordinance in and with that Christian Church-Society you are Members of: Nay, if you not constantly do it, unless providence plainly hinder. Are you guilty of these Omissions? if you are, they are your special sins, be humbled for, and endeavour to reform them.

And as the omission of Duties and Ordinances, to the slighty careless performance, may be your iniquity. Thus going unpreparedly unto Duties, rushing upon them without endeavouring to bring the heart into an holy spiritual frame; especially going to the Lord's Table without examination and excitation of Grace, deadness, and not acting of Grace in Duties, drowiness of heart, yea drowiness of body, if thou dost not endeavour to the utmost against it: Indeed if thou dost thus strive against bodily heaviness and sleepiness, and if thou dost not bring it on thy



thy self, by eating or drinking, or sitting up too late, or the like, it is thy meer natural infirmity, and upon thy Faith, Repentance, and Prayer, God will not impute it as sin to thee, but for the sake of Christ will pardon it. So vain, wandring, worldly, distracting thoughts in Duty, if thou dost not endeavour to drive away these Fowls of the Air, when they come upon thy Sacrifices, they are thy prevailing iniquities; but if thou dost by Faith, Prayer and Endeavours drive them away, they are but thy infirmities, however, not thy prevailing sins, when thou grieveest for, and groanest under them. So pride of gifts, expressions and enlargements in Duties: and again, not following Duties and Ordinances, not following the Word and Sacraments, with Prayer, Meditation, particular Application, nor following these with Watchfulness, and Endeavours suitable to your Prayers, and other Duties you perform.

Are not some of these the too frequent prevailing sins, that cleave to the holy things, even of you that may have Grace in truth? these you must be humbled for, and by Prayer and Faith seek the pardon of, and endeavour by these and an holy Watch, to keep your selves from.

X. And lastly, Which concerns only the truly Godly. Person's special sins may lyen in, or about their very Graces; namely, their  
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not endeavouring to grow in those Graces, and to act and exercise them, or falling into, and being foiled by those sins which are directly contrary to the Graces, wherein they have been most eminent. Thy iniquity, who hast true Grace, may be thy not drawing out those Habits of Grace God hath wrought in thee, into act and exercise, but suffering Grace to lye asleep and unacted. If God hath wrought Faith in thee, thy iniquity may be that thou dost not grow strong in Faith, that thou mightest so more glorifie God; that thou dost not act and use thy Faith, to resolve thy Doubts, and repel thy Fears; that thou dost not by Faith, fetch supplies of Grace and Strength against corruption, and temptation, from that Fountain of Strength, the all-sufficient Fulness of Christ. Hath God given thee the Habit of the Grace of Repentance, desires after, love to God and Christ, filial Fear, Meekness, &c. thy chief iniquity may be that thou dost no more exercise these daily in thy life to attain to more conformity and communion with God, curb thy Passions, prevent rash Anger, provoking Words, or any sinful carriages. Yea the iniquities of God's People may lye in being foiled by those sins which are directly opposite to those Graces wherein they have been most eminent. For it is observable in Scrip-  
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ture,

ture, that the sins the most eminent of Saints have been foiled by, were in the defect of, or in what was opposite to the Graces they were most eminent for. Thus in *Noah*; one that was a Preacher, and true and eminent Practiser of Righteousness and Temperance; his greatest iniquity mentioned, was his being over-taken with Drunkenness once. *Abraham* most eminent for Faith; his chief iniquity recorded was, through fear dissembling, and not owning his Wife, but saying, *She is my Sister*. *Lot*, who vexed his Soul for *Sodom's* sins, yet his iniquity upon record was, a very heinous and complicated sin, and of great affinity to theirs, namely, Drunkenness, and committing Uncleanness with his own Daughters. *Jacob* was a plain Man, yet his greatest sin recorded was, using indirect means to get the Blessing, even Dissimulation, and downright Lying, *Gen. 25*: *Moses*, the meekest Man on Earth, yet the sin that shut him out of *Canaan* was, speaking unadvisedly with his Lips. *Job* eminent in Patience, *Jam. 5. 11*, yet how many impatient Speeches did he utter? *David*, a Man after God's own heart; how tender was his Conscience? *1 Sam. 24. v. 5*. but where was this his tenderness when he committed the sins of Adultery and Murder? *Elijah* eminent for his Courage confronting *Ahab*, telling him it was he that troubled

troubled *Israel*, and setting himself against *Baal's* Priests, and slaying four hundred and fifty of them, 1 *King.* 18. 18, 22, 40. yet how faint-hearted was he, when out of fear and discontent he sues for Death? 1 *King.*

19. 4. *Peter*, how resolute and forward for Christ, yet how cowardly, sinfully and shamefully did he deny Christ? And God permits this, that the best of his people may learn to rely upon, not the strength of their Graces received, but the strength of Christ, and of his Spirit, and constantly to look up to, and depend upon him for fresh supplies of his Grace to be derived from him by Faith. Search whether your peculiar iniquities do not lye here, either in the want of growth in, and strengthening of your Graces, or want of the exercise of them; or in your falling into the sins directly opposite to those Graces of God's Spirit you have formerly been most eminent in, and labour especially to keep your selves from these iniquities, that they prove not your chief and most prevailing sins. And so much for the second General, which was to shew where men's special sins may most probably be found.

III. The next General Head is to give the Scripture-proof of the Doctrine, which I shall very briefly dispatch.

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I. That

I. That it is the duty of all peculiarly to keep themselves from their own iniquities, whether reigning, or but prevailing sins. It is proved from direct Scripture-commands, *Matth. 5. 29, 30. Mark 9. 43, 45, 47.* By the right hand, right foot, and right eye, are understood those sins our Text speaks of, such as men are as hardly prevailed upon to part with, as they would be to part with those Members of the Body. So *Heb. 12. 1. Let us lay aside the sin that doth so easily beset us*, which, as it may have respect to Original Corruption, and the body of Death that root, and fountain of all other sins; so it especially hath an eye to the peculiar reigning or prevailing sins, which may be called men's own ways, (*Isa. 53. 6.*) For these are the very first-born of Original Corruption, they are the sins that have men at every turn: Thus *Isa. 55. 7.* The wicked is exhorted and directed to forsake his way, and his thoughts; such ways of sin, and such particular corrupt thoughts, as he is most guilty of, and are most his own, as ever he would obtain mercy, and be abundantly pardoned, *Jer. 18. v. 11. Return you now every one from his evil way*: Every one hath some particular evil way, that he most walks in.

II. This is an evidence of uprightness, viz. for persons to keep themselves from their special

cial and most prevailing corruptions; this appears, in that, this is promised by God to be written in the hearts of men, as a special and essential part of Repentance, *Isa. 2. 20.* When those there spoken of, repented and were truly converted; they cast away their Idols of Silver and Gold, which cost them much, and they had set an high rate upon, but now they shall cast them away to the Moles and to the Batts; they account no place, no dunghill bad enough for them: So it is said, *Isa. 30. 22.* that when they truly repent, they shall defile the covering of their graven Images of Silver, cast them away as a menstruous Cloth, and say unto them, *Get you hence;* they shall throw them away with detestation as most abominable things. So *Hos. 14. 3, 8.* *When Israel returns to the Lord, he shall say, Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon Horses; we will say no more to the works of our hands, you are our Gods. Ephraim shall say, What have I any more to do with Idols? Carnal confidence in Assyria and Egypt, and in their Horses and strength at home, and in their Idols, had been Israel's & Ephraim's reigning sins, but when they truly and sincerely turn to the Lord, then they keep themselves from them, and will have no more to do with them.*

IV. The next General Head to be spoken to is, to explain what is meant by the upright Man's keeping himself from his Iniquity, And,

I. Negatively: It is not to be understood in a strict legal sense, as tho' every, or indeed any, upright Man did, or in the time of this life, while he is in the Body, and carries the Body of Sin and Death about him, could, so keep himself from his iniquity, as never to commit it after his conversion, or never to relapse into it after his Repentance of it, and his Faith for pardon of, and power against it, especially as to the inward stirrings and workings of corruption, or such sins as are meer Infirmities, or mixt ones, or sins of surprize: if this were the meaning of it, the best of Saints on Earth (no not *David*, a Man after Gods own Heart) could never have said, *I have kept my self from my iniquity*. *David* was guilty of dissimulation, and of the way of lying more than once: There are some sins of Constitution, Calling, Relation, Condition, &c. as have been mentioned above, that even an Upright Man may be pestered with all his days, and be foiled by them again and again; its true, it must be owned, that it is the duty of every Man, and the hearty desire and endeavour



deavour of every Upright Man, his habitual aim and design, and the bent of his Soul to keep himself from his own special sin, and indeed every known sin, so as not to allow himself in the commission thereof.

But if never committing or falling into this his iniquity, was the meaning of the Text, not a meer Man on Earth would be able to prove his Uprightness : That in *Eccles. 7. 20.* is true, not only of sin in general, but also of this special sin ; *There is not a Just man on earth that sinneth not,* Jam. 3. 2. not only in many things, but in the special sin which we are most inclined to, we sin more or less. The foregoing sense would condemn the generation of the Righteous, for where is the Upright Man or Woman that hath not cause to complain and confess, I have bewailed, prayed, and endeavoured against my pride, passions, workings of Corruption, Unbelief, and other my iniquities, and yet have again and again been foiled by them. Therefore,

II. Affirmatively. To shew you what it is in an Evangelical sense, for the Upright Man to keep himself from his iniquity. And,

I. To keep Mens selves from *their* iniquities, so as to evidence the uprightness of their Hearts thereby, is to break off from the practice of those sins they are most inclined to, that is, from the allowed, frequent, customary



committing of it, if it be an outward act of gross scandalous sin, yea from the allowed inward actings of his peculiar sins, tho' they be but meer infirmities, much more if they be mixed infirmities, that have too much of the Will, or present sensual delight in them, or that proceed from carelessness: He doth not keep himself from his iniquity, *who regards iniquity in his Heart*, Psal. 66. 18. That makes a Trade of his sin, customarily commits it, or frequently falls into it: He keeps himself from his iniquity, that can truly say as *Paul*, Rom. 7. 15. *That which I do, I allow not*, but if Men allow themselves in any known sin, they do not keep themselves from it, are not upright, and such who customarily and frequently fall into scandalous sins, as Tipling, Drunkenness, Swearing, Uncleaness, Defrauding, or any other sin, that they know to be so, they do not keep themselves from their Iniquity: It is your Duty therefore, to break off the allowed customary commission of any sin, and more especially of those sins that by reason of Constitution, Calling, Age, Place, Condition, or any other respect may be Mens own Iniquities, as they would prove that they are upright before God, thus *David*, 1 Sam. 26. 11.

II. That

II. That keeping Mens selves from their Iniquities, which is an Evidence of Uprightness before God, consists, in the bent and byass of the Soul being set against sin, and peculiarly against its special sins: In the Souls being heartily willing, and giving a full consent, to have its most beloved Lust, or most prevailing, tyrannizing Iniquity subdued, mortified, killed and crucified. It is to take up a firm purpose and resolution, and that in the strength of God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, against its special sins, it is to be active in keeping from, and mortifying these prevailing corruptions, and not to be merely passive: The Upright Man is not only kept from his sin, but keeps himself from it: As it is one thing to be humbled, and another to humble ones self; so it's one thing to be kept from committing the outward acts of sin, and another thing for a Man to make it his design and business to set himself against his sin, to keep it at an under, to Watch, Pray, Believe against it, and for the mortification of it: So the word in the Text, in the Voice it is used, signifies a reciprocal action, a Mans acting upon and towards himself, using as it were an holy violence on himself, towards his strong propensions, and particular iniquities. *I was a Preserver of my self,* so one Version: The Syriack,

*Syriack, I took heed to my self: The Arabick, I will take heed, or beware of mine Iniquity:* Men may be kept from their sins, yet not keep themselves, and so not be upright. Men may be kept from the outward acts of their sins by force, fear of Punishment from Men, or of displeasing of Friends, or from meer legal slavish fear of God and of Hell, by present checks, gnawings, or terrors of Conscience, by Sickness, or want of what may feed their Lusts, their Intemperance, Uncleaness, or the like, as in Poverty or Age it may be: In such cases Mens sins leave them, they do not leave or keep themselves from their sins: But then Men so keep themselves from their iniquities, as to evidence that they are upright, when they can say, as *Rom. 7. 15.* to the end.

III. A Man keeps himself from his Iniquity, so as to manifest his Uprightness, when, if he be overtaken and foiled by his iniquity, he mourns and grieves for it with true Evangelical Godly sorrow, and speedily renews the actings of his Repentance and Faith, and Prayers for Pardon of, and Power against it, not suffering guilt to lye on his Conscience, or the filth and power of his sin to lye quietly in his Soul, but confesseth it to God, and hath his Heart stirred up to an higher degree of indignation against it: This is the Duty, yea and

and Endeavour of all that would prove their Hearts Upright before God. Men may forbear the outward acts of their reigning sins for a time, from carnal or meerly legal grounds and principles, yet not loath them, but still have a liking to them, and when they do fall into them, not grieve aright, nor groan under them. You do not in the sense of the Text keep your selves from your iniquities, if upon foils by them, you do not speedily repent of them, confess, bewail them, believe and pray against them, and have not your Hearts filled with greater hatred of them: But he doth keep himself from his iniquity, so far as to approve his uprightness, who tho' he may sometimes, yea too often be guilty of some acts of it, yet it is the constant burden of his Soul; so that he groans under it, and is in bitterness of Soul for it, looking on Christ as pierced by it. He exercises Faith on Christ, wrestles with God in Prayer, and his Heart is more set against this his sin; so that whereas it has been peculiarly loved and delighted in before in his unregenerate state, or was more tickling of, and pleasing to the unregenerate part even after Conversion, he now comes to have his Heart more set upon the mortification of it, so as to offer an holy violence to it. This is for Men to keep themselves from their iniquities, for there must be an holy violence

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lence used against these special sins ; for tho' the Spirit in the regenerate part be willing, yet the flesh is weak yea wiful, and must be kept under.

IV. To be upright, and prove that uprightness by men's keeping themselves from their iniquities, it is, to watch against these sins in an especial manner, and all the occasions and the very appearances of these evils, and to resist the very first motions and risings of them in the heart ; and to use all the means God hath in his Word appointed and directed to, for the mortification of them ; to use and improve all Duties and Ordinances, the Word, Sacraments, Prayer, Fasting joyned with Prayer, and Communion of Saints, yea all publick, private and Secret Duties to this end ; This is for men to keep themselves from their iniquities ; he doth not do so, that runs upon the occasions of sin, such things as he hath found to feed his special sins ; he that runs into that company, that he hath found drawing him into sin, either drinking, wantonness, mispending of time, or any other sin, that he is inclined to, and easily foiled by ; he that doth not abstain from appearance of evil, *1 Thes. 5. 22.* doth not hate the garment spotted with the flesh, *Jude v. 23.* that doth not resist the very first motions of sin, but entertains them in his thoughts, suffers them to conceive, and breed

breed there. He doth not keep himself from his iniquity, that doth not deny himself in lawful things, that are not necessary, when and so far as, he finds them to minister occasion to his special sins : such an one doth in part fail in this duty of the Text, and so far in his uprightness, though in the main he be upright. Yea he that doth not use the means to mortifie his sins, the Word, Prayer, and ( if one that hath a right to them ) Sacraments, and improve them for this end, doth at least in degree fall short of integrity ; and if any wholly neglect to avoid occasions of sin, or to use the means to mortifie these sins, he is not upright at all ; but he that doth these things, avoids occasions of sin, and duly uses and improves the instituted means for mortifying of it, is upright. And these particulars may seem as Marks to try your selves by.

V. I proceed now in the next place to give the Reasons of the Doctrine. And

I. One Reason why it is the duty of every one that names the Name of Christ, and the Evidence of such an one's Uprightness, to keep himself from his iniquity, is, because it is by these sins that are men's own proper iniquities, (whether they be beloved reigning sins in the unregenerate, or prevailing and tyrannizing corruptions



corruptions in the regenerate) that God is most dishonoured; these are they that men take occasion from to reproach Religion, especially if they be outward open acts of sin that are fallen into. Now certainly it is the duty of all, especially of Believers, to keep themselves from that which may bring dishonour to God; and therefore will it be an Evidence of the uprightness of the heart, because he that really keeps himself from his iniquities, doth it from grounds and principles, from a respect to God's Glory; he keeps from them as things that do peculiarly dishonour God, transgress his holy Law, are committed against Christ, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit of God: For these are the right scriptural, spiritual grounds and motives of our keeping our selves from sin: Now men's own sins, dishonouring God, opposing Christ, and grieving the Spirit in a more than ordinary manner, to keep from some sins, and not from these, would argue a rotten heart.

II. Because for persons to keep themselves from their iniquities either reigning or prevailing corruptions, is, one special act, fruit and effect of true Evangelical Sorrow, and Repentance: Now it is our duty to exercise all the acts, and bring forth all the effects and fruits of true Repentance; but without this our Repentance is not truly Evangelical, for there is an essential part and act of it wanting, *viz.* that

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of taking an holy revenge on our sins, and on our selves for them, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. *Yea what revenge?* This is the only case in which revenge is lawful; and here it is commendable, yea our great and necessary Duty: This our prevailing corruption, (as you saw under the last Head) is that by which we have most dishonoured God, most wounded and pierced Christ; grieved, quenched and vexed the Spirit of God, and hath most wounded our own Consciences, defiled our Souls, and defaced God's Image in them; therefore we should keep our selves from these our iniquities, that we may take revenge on them, for the wrong they have done to God, and our own Souls; by being the death of those sins, which have in a more eminent manner, been the cause of the Death of Christ, and would be the Death of our Souls, if not repented of, pardoned; and subdued as to their reigning power; by how much any sin has been more delightful to us formerly, the more hateful it should be to us for the time to come. What *Amnon* unjustly did by *Tamar*, we may justly do by our beloved sins. Thus have true Penitents expressed their Repentance; so did *Mary Magdalen* when she Washed Christs Feet with her Tears, to take a revenge on those Eyes of hers, that had been Doors and Windows, Outlets, and Inlets to Lust and Wantonness as to her self, and by

by Wanton Glances had stirred up Lust in others ; and she took a Revenge on those Hairs that had been Nets and Snares to catch Men ; when she wiped Christs Feet with the Hairs of her Head. Thus Arch-bishop *Cranmer* who had subscribed a Recantation, when he was recovered from his Fall, and brought to the Stake, first put that Hand into the Flames that had Subscribed the Recantation.

III. Because to keep your selves from your iniquities, will be an Evidence of the power as well as the truth of your Repentance, and of the Work of Gods Sanctifying Spirit and Grace upon your Hearts ; therefore we should keep our selves from these our iniquities : These are the Master-sins, the Lordly-Lusts ; we should do by these as the King of *Syria* gave order to his Captains about the King of *Israel*, *1 Kin. 22. 31. Fight neither with small nor great save only with the King of Israel.* They were to fight with others, but against him chiefly : So we must fight against every sin, but we must aim our Arrows and Blows most peculiarly against our King-Lusts, to take them Captive, yea to kill and slay them : As it would be an Evidence of Falseness and Treachery in Officers and Souldiers in an Army, to shoot at the Common Souldiers amongst their Enemies, but when they see Captains or the General, to let them escape, and not make  
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a shot at them; no less will it be a sign of a false, rotten, Hypocritical Heart, to keep from some sins, but not from its special sins: But on the other hand it is a sign of sincerity, when Men keep themselves from these their most predominant sins, as those that are the greatest Enemies to God, and their Souls: Yea thus to keep from our special, most prevailing sins, will be an evidence of the power of Grace in the Heart; as it is an evidence of the power of a Prince, when he is got into the Heart of his Enemies Country, and takes his Forts and Strong-holds, so it will be a sign of the strength of Grace, when you keep from, and subdue your formerly beloved, or most prevailing corruptions; for these are the Strong-holds, that Sin, the World, and Satan have in your Hearts; therefore it will be an evidence that the Weapons of your Warfare are mighty through God, when they pull down those Strong-holds, and bring down every high thing into captivity, 2 Cor. 10. 4. 5. These your special sins are the Strong Man Armed, that keep the House, but now when you keep your selves from these sins, it proves Grace to be stronger than sin, when it overcomes these strong corruptions.

IV. Another reason why we should keep our selves from our special prevailing sins, and why it will be an evidence of our uprightness,

so to do is, because this will be an evidence of the truth and strength of our love to God and Jesus Christ, when we will deny them nothing, but are ready to pluck out right eyes, cut off right hands, keep and mortifie those sins which are by nature, by custom, and by their profit or pleasure as dear to us as those members of body are ; and indeed he who is inabled by grace, to part with his most beloved or prevailing sins, will by the same grace be inabled to part with his life for God, if called thereunto ; for Mens beloved lusts are dearer to them than their lives, yea than their Souls naturally : But if Men do not keep themselves from their beloved iniquities, they have no true love to God at all ; yea, if they do not set themselves with all their might against prevailing corruptions, it is a sign there is little love to God and Jesus Christ.

I now proceed to the Application of this Doctrine ; and much that hath been mentioned in the Explication, and Confirmation of the Doctrine, may be helpful to us in, and serve instead of the Application of it ; what hath been already said, shewing where men may seek for, and find their special sins either beloved and reigning lusts, or prevailing iniquities, may be useful by way of Direction to help you, to find out what your iniquities are, and what hath been spoken in the Application ; shewing what

it is for persons to keep themselves from their iniquities, may be helpful to you in Examination, whether you have this mark and evidence of the Uprightness of your hearts before God; and what hath been insisted on as Reasons of the Doctrine, may serve as Motives to inforce the Exhortation to all of us, to keep our selves from our peculiar Iniquities: But I shall make however some more particular Application, by way of Examination, Exhortation and Direction.

I. Let us make use of this Doctrine by way of Examination, to call on all, both myself and others, to examine whether we can evidence that we are upright before the Lord, by this, that we have been inabled to keep our selves from our iniquities; for consider you can have no evidence of sincerity, if you do not in some good measure keep your selves from your iniquity, at least from the reigning power of it, from every beloved Lust, and if you do not set your selves against, and use your utmost endeavours to keep your selves from your most prevailing tyrannizing Corruptions, that you find by experience you are most inclined to, and most easily and frequently foiled by. To indulge any sin out of love to it, and when convinced it is a sin, is the brand of a rotten-hearted Hypocrite, and the certain sign of a Mans being wholly void of a work of saving grace

grace, it argues no grace at all in truth ; and to be often foiled by prevailing ( tho' they be no reigning ) sins, is an argument of very weak Grace, and that it is at a very low ebb in the Soul. If you keep your selves from some sins that you are less inclined and have fewer temptations to, from constitution, employment, age, condition, or the like, and yet do not keep your selves from other sins, that you are more inclined to, at least if you do not to the utmost endeavour so to do, you can have no evidence of sincerity ; if, with *Saul*, you destroy the lean Cattle, but spare the Fat, and spare an *Agas*, a King Lust, you are but Hypocrites ; if you keep your selves only from lean Lusts, that can bring in little or no advantage to you, but even outward hurt, such as will waste your Estates, blast your Credit, impair your Health, consume your Bodies, destroy your Lives, or undo your Families, but spare fat Lusts, such whereby your gain comes in, which may raise you in your Estate, or in your esteem with Men, or are pleasing and delightful sins, this is a sign of an unsound heart ; if you allow your selves in the sins that your Callings lay before you Temptations to, Injustice, Oppression, Deceit, or any Unlawful Gains, if there be any *Delilah* you lay in your Bosoms, or lay your heads in the Lap of, your hearts are



are not upright : But if you regard no iniquity in your heart, would not leave a Hoof behind, spare no *Agas*, has no *Delilah*, it is a sign of an upright heart. Examine therefore your selves, whether you have kept your selves from your iniquity. To keep from the committing some sins that you have no great inclination or temptation to, is no sign of sincerity ; but to keep your selves from the sins your natural temper, age, &c. leads you to, this will be an evidence of grace. As for instance, for an old Man to keep from Wantonness, from Acts of Uncleaness or Prodigality, this is no sign of his sincerity, when possibly he thinks or speaks of such sins with delight ; his sins in such a case have rather left him, than he has left his sins : So it's no sign of Uprightness for the young Man to keep himself from Covetousness ; but now for the young Man to flee youthful Lusts, Pride, Vanity, Disobedience to Superiours, Uncleaness, Intemperance, Evil Companions, Sins that he hath the most strong Temptations to, this is a sign of Grace : So for the old Man to keep himself from Covetousness, Frowardness and other Sins of Age, is an evidence of true Grace, yea of some strength of it ; for the Rich or Prosperous Person to keep himself from Pride, Security, Trusting in Riches,

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Honours, Friends, and from making them Fewel for his Lusts; And for the Afflicted Person to keep himself from Discontent or using indirect Means to get out of his Straits and Troubles; for the Tradesman to keep himself from Trading Sins, for him that hath great dealings in the World, yet to keep his heart free for God, and for his Worship; this will be a sign of an upright heart, as keeping its self from its own iniquity. You have heard in the Explication of the Doctrine, what it is to keep your selves from your iniquities; make use of those heads here to try your selves by. Do you endeavour to break off the allowed customary practice of the sins you are most prone to? is the bent of your hearts against these sins chiefly, and your wills set against them? can you truly say, you hate them, when you are foiled by any of them? do you mourn and cry out under the sense of them, as *Paul, Rom. 7. 24. O wretched Man that I am!* when you have been overtaken with your special sin, can you never rest till you have recovered your selves by Confession, Prayer, renewed Acts of Faith and Repentance, so that tho' sometimes you fall into your special iniquity, yet you keep your self from the reigning power of it, you dare not lye in it, and after particular foils by your iniquity, and your recovery from them, do you

you give those iniquities of yours a more deadly wound, set your selves against it, endeavour more the mortification of it, watch, and pray, and believe more against it, and against all occasions of, and temptations to it, and make use of all means God hath appointed to keep you from it? *viz.* all Ordinances, and Providences for this end; Ordinances, the Word Read, Preached, Meditated, and Conferred on, Sacraments, Fasting, Communion of Saints, your own and others Experiences, and all Providences both of Mercy and Affliction, to keep under sin, yea this sin, and keep from it in your hearts and lives; so that after your falls you gain more ground against it. If it be thus with you, tho' you may too often be foiled by your particular corruptions, yet you do keep your selves from your iniquities, so far at least as to approve the uprightness of your hearts before God: But on the other side if you customarily commit these sins, if you indulge them, and allow your selves in the Acting of them, nay if your hearts be not set against them, so that, tho' you leave them, or they leave you, yet you do not loath them, do not grieve when you fall into them; do not act Faith and Repentance, do not watch against them, use not the means of mortifying them, but run upon the occasions of them, they are your beloved reigning sins.

II. Another Use I shall make of this Doctrine is by way of Exhortation ; earnestly to press all, that they would not rest short of this evidence of Uprightness, the keeping themselves from their iniquities.

In prosecution of which Use, I shall add both Motives and Directions.

Be exhorted all of you to keep your selves from your iniquities, the sins which by Calling, Constitution, Relation, outward Condition, or Spiritual Estate, you are most prone to, and may most properly be called your iniquities. You must endeavour to keep your selves from all sins whatsoever, as to the allow'd committing of them, but especially from these iniquities. And there are two branches of this Use of Exhortation.

1. That you would labour to find out what your special iniquity is, whether a beloved lust, a reigning sin, or a too much prevailing corruption.

2. That having found it out, you would endeavour to cast it out, and keep your selves from it.

I. Be exhorted to make a diligent search to find out what your proper reigning or prevailing sins are. This Exhortation is rightly grounded on this Doctrine ; for if it be your duty to keep your selves from your iniquity, then

then it is certainly your duty to make a diligent search into your own hearts and lives, to find it out, for you can never actively keep your selves from it, or by faith, prayer and watchfulness set against it, if you do not first search it out. And here all those particulars insisted on under that head, in the opening the Doctrine, [Where you are to search for these iniquities] are of great use, and proper to be returned upon. Look into your Constitutions, Callings and all the other particulars mentioned there: But because it is a matter of great concern, I shall add other signs, to help you in this search I am exhorting you to.

1. That is thy iniquity, thy special prevailing corruption, yea, if in an unregenerate state, thy beloved reigning lust, which thou dost with peculiar frequency commit, and art with peculiar ease, drawn into that sin which through custom is become a second nature; that is this iniquity (which thou must keep thy self from) next to original corruption, which is every mans own iniquity, and the root of all other sins. Sins which Men have accustomed themselves to commit, are most properly their iniquities, yea if not grieved for, prayed, believed and watched against, they are their reigning sins: That sin that finds the door of the heart always open to entertain it, or ready to open at the first knock, that

that sin, in respect of which thy heart is like to Tinder; no sooner can the spark of a temptation, or an occasion fall upon thee, but thy heart presently catcheth at, be it Pride, Passion, Lust, Intemperance, Couzenage, love of lewd, loose Companions, so that no sooner doth a loose Companion hold up his finger, but thou presently yieldest, this is thy iniquity. That sin which thou can't deny nothing to, as *Sampson* could deny *Delilah* nothing, but tells her all his heart, tho' it was to his ruine, lost him his strength, his eyes, and at last his life, that is thy *Delilah-lust*, that thou can't not deny, tho' it cost thee thy Estate, Name, Relations, Life, yea thy very Soul. It is true, a sincere Soul may be frequently foiled by inward workings of his Corruptions, and may relapse into the same sin again and again, and this is his iniquity, his prevailing sin; but that sin which thou can't deny nothing to, is more than a bare prevailing sin, (though that is ill enough) it is a reigning sin.

2. That is thine iniquity (a beloved lust in the unregenerate, and a prevailing corruption in the regenerate) that ingrosseth thy thoughts most; that thy thoughts run out upon, and are most busily employed about, especially in times of retirement, when thou art alone and hast most free opportunity for thinking;  
if



if these thoughts be allowed, indulged, delightful ones, and most of all if these thought and contrivances about accomplishing the sin croud in, and be entertained by thee, when thou art at the Worship of God, and in holy Duties ; so that sin which thou art thinking of, when in thy Calling, when alone in thy Closet, or in the Night-seasons, when thou wakest, that sin which lieth down with thee at night, and waketh with thee, when thou wakest in the night or morning ; that is usually last in thy thoughts when thou goest to sleep, and first in the morning, and interrupts thee most, when thou art, or shouldst be conversant in Duties of Divine Worship ; that is thy iniquity, else thy thoughts would not be so much working about and towards it. If they be worldly thoughts that are thus thy constant Companions, Worldliness is thy Iniquity ; if thoughts of thy Pleasures, Voluptuousness is thy Iniquity ; if thoughts of meeting with Tipling, Gaming, Wanton Companions, if lustful unclean Thoughts, then Intemperance and Lust is thy Iniquity ; if Angry, Wrathful, Envious, Malicious, Revengful Thoughts, then Anger, Envy, Malice, Revenge are thy Iniquities : Yea, if wandring thoughts prevail in Duties, these are thy iniquities ; if thou dost indulge such thoughts, allow, delight in them, and roll them in thy mind with pleasure,

sure, as thou wouldst do a sweet morsel under thy tongue. Such sins are thy beloved lusts, and reigning sins, for Christ himself hath said, *Matth. 16. 21. Where the treasure is, there the heart will be also*; therefore if thy allowed delightful thoughts are running upon any sin, that sin is thy treasure: And though sinful thoughts of any of the fore-mentioned kinds, even be they but distracting thoughts, if they be not allowed but grieved for and repented of, are not reigning sins, yet if they very frequently and powerfully carry thee down, they are thy prevailing and tyrannizing corruptions; which if bewail'd, resisted, prayed, believed and watched against, do not disprove thy sincerity, yet they often very much hinder the evidence of it, and therefore must be thy continual grief and burden; and thou must especially endeavour to keep thy self from these sins as thine Iniquities.

3. That is very likely to be thy iniquity, which thy best Friends, those that love thee most, and wish thee best, do most tell thee of, warn thee against, and reprove thee for; that thou hearest ofteneft from these about, surely thou art more than ordinarily inclined to, else thy Friends would not so often trouble thee about them. And these Friends are of two sorts, Friends without thee and Friends within thee.

1. That

(1.) That sin which thy best friends without thee, do most frequently tell thee, and warn thee of, such as faithful Ministers, especially thy own Pastors, Godly, faithful Christian Friends, Godly Relations, as Yoke-fellow, Parents, Masters, any Superiours, yea or Equals, what such notice in thee, and do frequently admonish thee of, thou may'st conclude that is thy iniquity, a sin thou art much inclined to: For *Love covers a multitude of sins*; in this sense, thou should'st say to thy self; surely this is my iniquity, else these my Friends who I am satisfied love me, and wish me well, would not so notice it, and reprove me for it.

(2.) Thou hast a Friend in thy Bosom; Conscience, this is either the best Friend next to God and Christ, or if thou despisest, affrontest and provokest it, the worst Enemy thou canst have in all the World. Would'st thou then find out thy iniquity, hearken to the Voice of Conscience, that is like to be thy iniquity, which thy Conscience most charges upon thee, and most sharply checks thee for, being rightly informed by the Word, of the sinfulness of that which it accuseth thee of; and also giving a true testimony as to matter of fact, and thy being guilty of committing such a sin.

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This I add, because if Conscience be erroneous and misinformed, or a scrupulous Conscience, that charges that to be a sin which is not, or if it give a false testimony as to matter of fact, as in the case of doubting, desponding Souls, or those under clouds of Melancholy, Conscience may often accuse them falsely, and its Judgment then cannot safely be depended on: But if it be rightly informed as to the thing being a sin, and true in its testimony that thou art greatly guilty of it, and that it is thy special iniquity, it is what thou should'st take great notice of: And especially Conscience is to be attended to in its accusations of thee, as to what is more peculiarly thy iniquity, at some special seasons; such as these,

(1.) That is thy iniquity, at least too prevalent in thee, which Conscience rightly and truly most accuseth thee of, and checks thee for, when thou sittest under the Ministry of the Word; which Conscience points thee to, when sin in general is spoken against; when it turns the edge of reproofs, precepts, threatnings against thy particular sins, and saith, *thou art the man* that these reproofs and threatnings belong to, tho' the Minister thought not of thee, nor knew any special concern thou had in them.

(2.) That is like to be thy special sin which Conscience truly charges thee with in the day of adversity, when under some great affliction, in thy Body, Name, Estate, Liberty, Relations, when on a sick Bed, or in some eminent danger, observe the Voice of Conscience at such seasons; when it saith, this affliction, loss, cross, is for such a sin, for thy sinning against, or with, or not improving of such a Mercy; that which at such a time most startles, and affrights thy Soul, comes first, or fixes most upon thy Thoughts, that is like to be thy special sin, which thou should'st be more deeply humbled for, and by Faith in Christ, Prayer, and Watchfulness keep thy self from; so in time of Sicknes, that which is most set home upon thee by Conscience, and thou hast most thoughts of reforming, and takest up purposes and resolutions most against it, that looks very like the sin thou hast been peculiarly defiled by; for tho' Conscience may be lulled asleep in time of Prosperity, Ease and Health, yet usually in times of Affliction, it will speak out, and if it do, it is to be heedfully attended to.

(3.) That is like to be thy iniquity, which Conscience charges thee with, when either thou apprehendest thy self near to Death, or when at any time thou art most serious in the Thoughts of Death and Judgment, either particular at Death, or general at the Resurrection:

That

That sin, which the thoughts of makes thee most unwilling to dye, and afraid to look Death in the Face, and make the thoughts of the day of Judgment most dreadful, so that thou tremblest to think of appearing at the Tribunal and Judgment-Seat of God, when Conscience says, how canst thou think of Dying, and of appearing before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, whilst thou continuest in, or art so frequently foiled by such or such a sin ; those sins are, if not beloved Lusts, yet at least Tyrannizing Corruptions in thee.

(4.) Another season wherein thou should'st peculiarly attend to the Voice of Conscience in order to finding out what is thine iniquity, is when thou settest upon the duty of Self-examination, Prayer, or receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. That sin, which Conscience upbraids thee with, so that thou dost, or art ready to question the truth of the Work of Grace on thy Heart, which blots and blurs thy Evidences of Grace, so that thou canst not read them, and hinders thy boldness at the Throne of Grace, or is ready to prove an Objection against thy coming to the Table of the Lord ; surely that is thy iniquity, if not a beloved Lust, yet a prevailing corruption, which thou art too easily and too often foiled by. When thou settest thy self to the duty of Examination before a Sacrament, or on any other occasion,



occasion, what sin is that which Conscience casts as a block in thy way, as a flaw in thy evidences, so that when thou findest something in thee that gives thee some hopes, that there is a Work of Grace in thy Heart, then Conscience flies in thy Face, and saith, how can'st thou judge thou hast true Grace, when there is still so much Pride, Hypocrisy, Passion, Worldliness, Lust, so much Deadness and Formality in Duties, and thou art so often foiled by some of these Corruptions? So when thou goest to set upon the Duty of Prayer, what sin is that which hinders thy boldness at the Throne of Grace, concerning which Conscience is ready to say to thee, how can'st thou go to God as thy Father, when thou expressest such an Unchild-like carriage towards God? so that sin which makes thee afraid to go to the Sacrament, and Conscience stands in thy way and says, how dar'st thou approach to God in that high Ordinance, while thou art so often foiled by such or such a corruption, that is thine iniquity, which at least too much prevails over thee, if Conscience do truly charge thee with it. Indeed Conscience may go too far in such a charge, especially in a weak, doubting, tempted Soul, when it argues the total want of a Work of Saving Grace, because the Soul is frequently overtaken by these corruptions, and charges these sins on the Soul as reigning,

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which

which are really in it but tyrannizing corruptions ; but tho' if they be bewailed, prayed, believed, watched and striven against, and when committed, repented of, they are not reigning sins, and the Soul ought not to conclude it self destitute of Saving Grace, yet you may and ought to hearken to the Voice of Conscience charging you with them, and may conclude that such sins are your special sins, which you are most in danger of being defiled by, and therefore it is your duty to use the greatest care and diligence to keep your selves from them.

IV. That is very probably thy iniquity, as which thy best friends most tell thee of, so which thy worst Enemies do most upbraid thee with, and do most frequently and bitterly charge upon thee, provided the charge be true as to matter of fact ; for otherwise the Devil and Wicked Men do oft charge the people of God with predominant Hypocrisie, and many other sins, concerning which through the Grace of God they can say, as *Psal. 35. 11.* *They lay to my charge, things that I knew not ;* but if the charge be true as to matter of fact, that thou art really, and especially, if thou be frequently guilty of the sin, that thy Enemies accuse thee of, and do often cast in thy dish, tho'

tho' it may not be a reigning sin, yet it is thy iniquity.

(1.) That sin which the Devil that great Enemy and Accuser of the Brethren doth truly charge thee with in the hour of temptation; upon account of which he would prove thee to be an Hypocrite, and cause thee to call in question thy Interest in Christ, and whether there be any true work of Grace in thy Heart, that is like to prove thy iniquity, with reference to which he is ready to say to thee, can'st thou be a Child of God, or dost thou hope to be saved, and yet such sins so oft prevail over thee, suppose Pride, Passion, inward workings of Lust, and frequent out-breakings of Worldly or Fleshly Lusts; such coldness, deadness, and distractions in duty; now tho' if these be thy burden, and thou would'st be rid of them, prayest, believest, and sincerely strivest against them, his charge against thee, that thou art an Hypocrite, and that these are reigning sins in thee, be false, yet that which he makes the ground of this his charge, viz. thy being frequently overcome by such corruptions, being true, thou may, yea thou should'st look upon that sin, as thy iniquity; and should'st be humbled for it, and continue, yea increase thy Watchfulness, Prayer, and Faith, against it, as such:

(2.) That sin which Wicked and Ungodly Men, the Enemies of God's People, and of thee, if thou be truly Godly, I say, that sin which they truly accuse thee of, as frequently guilty of, and thence take advantage to cast dirt upon thy Profession and Religion it self, saying, Are not these Professors Proud, Passionate, Worldly, Vain and Airy in their carriage, as well as others? Now if this be truly charged on thee, tho' they may not be beloved Lusts, yet they are thy iniquities; Observe therefore what Enemies, Satan and Wicked Men truly lay to your charge, for tho' Enemies be bad and incompetent Judges, yet they may prove right Informers, for an Enemy may discover that which a Friend, through partiality, unwillingness to displease, and blind fond love may not discover, what thy Enemy charges thee with; therefore, thou hast cause to suspect it is thy iniquity; and if the charge be false, yet thou should'st make use of it to make thee watchful.

V. A fifth Sign of that which is thy iniquity, yea a beloved Lust, is a deliberate unwillingness to have it discovered, reprov'd and spoken against: When thou art fixedly angry at those that tell thee plainly of it, and reprove thee for it; that is thy iniquity, which thou would'st have spared and dealt gently with;

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concerning which, thou wouldst if thou couldst and durst, charge Ministers, and others, as *David* did concerning *Absalom*, 2 Sam. 18. 5. Deal gently with the young man, even *Absalom*; so deal gently with such a sin. Thou canst hear other mens sins spoken against and reprov'd, and like it well enough, as the Covetous Man can pleasedly enough hear Pride and Prodigality spoken against; and the Proud, Prodigal, Luxurious Man likes well enough to hear Covetousness branded, but when thy *Delilah*, thy *Herodias* is reprov'd, thou art in a rage, thou frettest and stormest; as *Herod* could hear *John Baptist* gladly; but when he toucheth his *Herodias*, then he presently clapt him up in Prison, and *Herodias* will have *John Baptist's* Head in a Charger, because he had cast her sin in her dish. So when Christ came to reprove the Pharisees Hypocrisie, Self-righteousness, &c. then they hate him, tho' they could well enough hear him confusing the Sadducees, and liked what he said till he came to touch their *Diana*, their Covetousness, their Hypocriticalness, and Pharisaical Righteousness; this was an Evidence, these were their beloved Lusts, their reigning sins: So when *Stephen* in his excellent defence of himself before the Scribes, Pharisees, and Elders, came to charge their particular sin upon them, *Acts* 7. 51, 52. and says, You stiff-necked and

uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye always resist  
the Holy Ghost, and chargeth them with being  
the Betrayers and Murderers of Christ, which  
were their greatest and most reigning sins;  
then it is said, *they were cut to the heart, and*  
*gnashed on him with their teeth;* they could  
hear him a great while patiently, but when  
he came to touch their Copy-hold, then they  
with a brutish fury run upon him, and cry,  
*away with him, stone him:* It was a sign in  
all the forementioned cases, that the sins that  
they could not bear to have reprov'd, or  
roughly dealt with, were their iniquities, even  
beloved Lusts; Only I add, that I may not  
condemn the Generation of the Righteous,  
That this unwillingness to be reprov'd, and  
anger at Reprovers, which proves the  
sin thou art reprov'd for, to be thy beloved  
sin, is a deliberate, allowed, and fixed dis-  
pleasure against reprovers and reproof; for it  
must be granted that even a good Man, whose  
Heart is upright in the main, may upon sur-  
prise, in the height of Temptation, and in  
the Heat of Passion, when reprov'd on a sud-  
den, just upon the commission of a sin, be an-  
gry at reproof, and him that gives it, as it was  
with *Asa*, 2 Chron. 16. 10. yet it is said,  
1 Kin. 15. 14. *That his heart was perfect with*  
*the Lord all his days.* But when the sincere  
Believer recovers himself, he can with Da-  
vid,



vid, bleſs God, for any means; tho' moſt ſharp reproof, that keeps him from ſin, or recovers him after falls into ſin, 1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. *Pſal.* 141. 5. but if thou haſt a fixed, abiding diſpleaſure againſt Reprovers, it is a ſign of an unſound heart; and if there be any ſin that thou doſt not care to have reprov'd, and art angry, though but in preſent paſſion at the Reprover, it is a ſign that ſin hath too great an hank upon thee.

VI. Another Sign, by which a Perſon may know which is his peculiar iniquity, yea beloved luſt, is this; That is thy Maſter-ſin, thy reigning corruption that makes all other ſins ſtoop and lacquay to it, and ſubſerve as means to feed and maintain it. As Waters run and empty themſelves into the Sea, ſo do other ſins into this thy iniquity. Thus the Covetous Man is guilty of many other ſins, he pincheth as to laying out any thing to pious or charitable uſes, yea as to conveniences as to himſelf or his Relations, he buries himſelf in worldly buſineſs, neglecting publick, family, ſecret duties, his own Soul, and the Souls under his charge; he oft overreacheth thoſe he deals with, he oppreſſeth the poor and the like; and all this is to ſatiſſie his luſt of covetouſneſs, and love  
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of Money ; this is a sign Covetousness is his reigning sin ; thus the Voluptuous, Luxurious Person, he may be guilty of many other sins of profane neglecting of Holy Duties ; mis-spending Time, and Estate, consuming his Body ; yea, he may be guilty of Covetousness, Deceiving and Oppressing Tenants or others, but all is to feed his Voluptuousness : So the Proud and Ambitious Man, may be guilty of Time-serving, Sinful Compliance, of Fawning, Flattering Men in their Sins, neglecting Duties, and of Injustice, Covetousness, Falshood, Treachery, Carnal Policy, and that even in Religion ; and all this to feed and maintain Pride of Life, Pride in Apparel or way of Living, and to gratifie his Ambition, and Lust of being great in the World ; That sin which ( as the greater Fish ) devours the lesser, thou mayst conclude is thy iniquity, thy reigning sin, so far as thou allowest thy self in it.

**VII** That is certainly thy iniquity, yea thy reigning sin, which not only all thy other Sins, but also all thy Duties are made subservient to ; and all that Religion thou professest and seemest to have, be it little or much, is made a Stalking-horse to, and a meer step or stirrup to get to the Satisfaction

faction of. Thus it was in the case of  
*Jezebel*, his Master-sin was Ambition and  
 Carnal Policy; his great design was settling  
 himself in the Kingdom; and he made not  
 only his sins in keeping up the Calves at  
*Dan* and *Bethel* subservient to this, but  
 also his Zeal in executing the Judgments  
 God had threatened against the House of  
*Ahab*, and had commanded him to execute,  
 2 Kings 9. 7. and his Zeal in putting down  
 the Worship of *Baal*, and pulling down  
 the House, and slaying the Priests of *Baal*;  
 all this was to serve his Ambition and Car-  
 nal Policy; for he would go no further in  
 Reformation, than would, as he thought,  
 consist with his worldly interest; and there-  
 fore he still kept up the Worship of the  
 Calves. Thus also it was with the Scribes  
 and Pharisees; their reigning sins were  
 Pride, Ambition, Vain Glory, Covetous-  
 ness and Hypocrisie, and they made all  
 their Religion to serve and lacquay to these  
 Lusts of theirs; they Fasted, gave Alms,  
 Prayed, but it was to be seen of Men;  
 they made long Prayers to cover and gra-  
 tifie their Covetousness, that they might  
 devour Widows Houses. Thus Politicians  
 in Religion, all their Religion is cut out,  
 and squared by Carnal Policy; their very  
 conscience is a carnally Politick one, guided  
 by

by Rules of Policy, not Piety : If therefore thou makest thy Religion a Cloak and Cover for any sins, for Covetousness, Deceit, Injustice, or any other, tho' but secret sins, those sins are thy iniquities, thy reigning sins.

VIII. That is thy iniquity, thy reigning sin, that proves too hard for all means of Mortification, for all Ordinances, Providences, Councils, Admonitions, Exhortations and Intreaties of Friends and Relations : yea for all Resolutions, Purposes, Promises ; This is thy iniquity ; between thy heart and which, there is such a League that thou wilt by no means part with it, but wilt keep it, and gratifie it, whatever it costs thee : that way which thou thus choosest is thy own way, *Isa. 66. 3. They have chosen their own ways; their Soul delights in their Abominations.* I grant, there may be such sins, even in the regenerate upright Man, as may be so far too hard for all Ordinances and Providences, Admonitions, Purposes, Promises, as that they may be frequently foiled by them, as rash Anger, unruly Passions, the inward stirrings of Corruption, and yet not be reigning sins, so long as the Soul doth not choose them, but the bent of the heart is against them,  
he

he mourns for them, prays and believes, and strives against them: But now if there be any sin that thou allowest thy self in, notwithstanding all Commands, Promises, Threatnings thou meetest with in the Written and Preached Word, and notwithstanding thou hearest it often Reproved, by Ministers, Parents, other Superiours, or Christian Friends; that sin, whether of Omission or Commission, is thy iniquity, a reigning sin: and that sin which hath been too hard for all Providences, for all the Mercies which God hath bestowed upon thee, and have an Heart-melting, and Purifying, and Sin-killing tendency; and too hard for all Afflictions outward or inward, thou hast been exercised with, and for all the Judgments of God, thou hast seen upon others, or felt the smart of upon thy self, in thy body by Sickness or Painful Distempers, in thy Name, or Estate, or Family: and tho' thou hast had Convictions, Gripes and Checks of Conscience, Fears and Terrours, and thereupon hast taken up Purposes and Resolutions, and made Promises of Reformation, of breaking off such Sins, or setting upon such Duties, as thou hast felt the smart of the Commission or Omission of. That sin which no intreaties of the nearest tenderest Relations will prevail on thee, to forsake or be willing

ling to part with, that is thy iniquity; that sin which thou wilt venture the loss of all, even the dearest and most precious Things, thy Body and all the Comforts of thy Life, yea thy Soul and Favour of God, the loss of Heaven, and wilt venture upon the torments of Hell, rather than forsake it; So that tho' it waste thy Estate, blast thy Credit, undo thy Family; weaken and consume thy Body, yea, damn thy Soul, yee thou wilt not leave it. That is thy reigning iniquity, be it Laciviousness, or Drunkenness, or but spending time with loose, tipsy, gaming or wanton Companions.

IX. That is thy iniquity, O Soul, which thou wilt not part with, upon any the most Advantagious, Honourable Terms, and Offers that God makes to thee in the Gospel: That sin which breaks the match between thy Soul and Christ even when it seems to be near making up, and thou hast some inclinations to consent to this blessed match; that sin which thou wilt not part with, no not for Christ the Saviour. Tho' God offer thee in the Gospel, Pardon and Peace, Grace and Glory, Christ and all his Benefits, and Christ offers himself, and thou may'st have him and all his Riches, if thou wilt but come to Christ, and to God through him,



him, and be willing to leave thy sins, and come off of thy own Righteousness, and yet thou wilt not leave thy sins, thy Tipling, Loose, Wanton, Gaming, Profane Companions, thy fleshly Lusts, or thy Wordly-Mindedness, thy unjust deceitful ways of Gain, or thy resting in thy own Righteousness, or any thing short of Christ: These are certainly thy beloved Lusts: And that sin, O Soul, which breaks the Match between Thee and Christ, that is thy sin with a Witness: When thou hast some inclinations to embrace Christ, and art willing to forsake many sins, but there is some sin or sins that thou canst not bring thy Heart to be willing to part with, but art ready to say of it as Lot of Zoar, *Gen. 19. 20.* or as Naaman of his bowing in the House of Rimmon, *2 Kings 5. 18.* there is some secret sin thou would'st have spared, some pleasing, profitable corruption, some close way of Lust, Deceit, &c. so that if thou could'st have Christ and thy Sin too, thou would'st have him, but not else; thus Judas's Covetousness caused him to sell Christ his Lord and Master; the Young Mans love of the World caused him to go away from Christ sorrowful. Herod did several things, but would not part with his Herodias. These were their iniquities.

X. Lastly!

X. Lastly, That is thy iniquity, if not certainly thy reigning sin, yet thy too prevailing corruption, which most frequently and impetuously sets upon thee, before, in, and after thy conversing with God's Ordinances, and Holy Duties, either to keep thee from them, or indispose thee for them, or croud in upon thee, and interrupt thy communion with God in them, or after Duties to rob thee of the benefit of them; it speaks that thy Heart and that Sin, are too well acquainted, that it finds too kind entertainment with thee, that it dares be so bold and impudent as ordinarily to set upon thee, when thou art more immediately in the presence of God in Holy Duties. Satan will be sure at such seasons to stir up such Lusts in thy Heart, as are pleasing and are likely to find most easie access, and best entertainment, as possibly, Worldly and Vain Thoughts before and in Duties, Drowsiness, Sleepiness, Deadness and Dulness of Heart and Affections: I say, the sins that most pester thee on Lords days, or other times of either ordinary or extraordinary Duties: And so the sins that set on thee after Duties, after the Word Read or Heard, after Prayer and Receiving the Lords Supper, and after Sabbaths, be it Pride, Security, laying down the Soul's Watch, unruly Passions, Worldliness, &c. these are thy iniquities,

iniquities, which thou must keep thy self from; beware of the Devil, and the sin of thy own Heart on *Monday Mornings*, and after Hearing, Praying, Fasting, and Sacraments.

And thus I have finished this Branch of Exhortation, to find out what your special reigning sins or most prevailing corruptions are, and have largely laid down signs and marks, whereby you may know which are they: Yet before I leave it, I shall endeavour to answer one Question or Case of Conscience, and therein shew the difference between a beloved Lust, a reigning Sin in an Unregenerate Man, and a tyrannizing prevailing Corruption in a Godly Person; for some doubting Christian may say, I am afraid such and such sins, that I am so often mastered by, such as Passions, inward workings of corruptions, &c. are reigning sins in me, and inconsistent with Uprightness of Heart; now how shall I know, whether they be so or no? Now for answer to this doubt, tho' much has been spoken under the Heads already laid down, yet I shall add somewhat further, though but briefly.

I. One difference between a beloved Lust or reigning Sin, that is inconsistent with Uprightness, and prevailing Corruptions that yet  
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are consistent with Uprightness, is this. That is a beloved Lust, a reigning Sin, which is indulged, and that the Soul makes Provision for, that a Man caters for, and casts about how to provide that which may feed and maintain it, *Rom. 13. 14. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof*, to gratifie and satisfie its Appetite, to pamper the Flesh. It is a beloved Friend that you make special provision for, and cast about how you may best entertain: Therefore if you set your Thoughts on work to find out a commodious way to commit such a sin, to meet with loose, tripling Companions, or run upon the occasions of sin (what you have found to be so) and into that company which you have found drawing you into sin; it is a sign that is a beloved Lust; When sin doth not so much overtake thee, as thou followest hard after, and overtakeest sin; even lesser sins in this case may be reigning sins: If thou settest thy self to Sleep at Divine Worship, or thou welcomest and kindly entertainest Vain, Worldly, Proud, Lustful, or any other sinful Thoughts, especially in the time of duty; these are reigning sins. But on the other hand, tho' sinful Thoughts break in upon thee, or thou dost commit some outward acts of sin, if (as *Gal. 6. 1.*) thou be overtaken with a fault, but dost not make provision for the Flesh, but en-  
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deavourest to cut off all provisions from it; flee from all occasions of it, usest all means to cut Sin and the Flesh short, and keep them under, if Drowsiness in Holy Duties seize on thee, and thou endeavourest to shake it off. Vain Wandring Thoughts in Worship, or any sinful Thoughts at other times impetuously break in, and thou endeavourest to expel them; in this case they are not beloved sins, nor reigning corruptions; tho' they are such prevailing corruptions, as are very much thy special sins, which it is thy duty to be humbled for, and by Faith, Prayer, Watchfulness, and most vigorous endeavours to keep thyself from.

II. Another difference between a beloved Lust, a reigning Sin in the Unregenerate and Insincere, and a tyrannizing Corruption in the Regenerate and Upright is this. That is a reigning sin in any, which is suffered to have quiet and peaceable possession in the Heart, that a person is unwilling to have disquieted, or himself disturbed in the committing of; the sin which is not resisted, that thou dost not Believe, Pray and Watch against; and when thou hast fallen into it, dost not endeavour speedily to recover thyself out of, by acts of Faith and Repentance, and by earnest Prayer, Endeavours, and Watchfulness against it for

the time to come. A clean beast may fall into the Mire, but gets out of it again as soon as ever it can; it is a Swine that lies, and loves to wallow in the Mire: And thou art no better than a filthy Swine, if thou lovest to wallow in the Mire of thy Lusts, and not get out of it: But now that is not a reigning sin in thee, tho' it do too oft prevail over thee, which thou grieveest for, mournest under, and wilt not suffer to be quiet in thy Soul, but resolvest it shall not ever have a quiet day, no nor hour in thee: If thou resistest it by the Weapons of thy Spiritual Warfare, Prayest, and improveest Christ against it, and when thou art overtaken with it, art not at rest, till thou renewest thy Faith and Repentance, and lookest up to Christ for strength against, as well as the Pardon of it: If it be thus with thee, thy iniquity is not a reigning sin, for he is a cleanly person, who tho' he fall into the Dirt, cannot rest till he get out of it, and be cleansed again.

III. That is a beloved Lust, that thou art unwilling to have discovered; art deliberately angry at any person or thing that stands in thy way, or would hinder thee from committing of it, art angry at the Word, when that meets with thy Sin. But on the other hand, if thou art glad to have thy sin discovered



vered and reprov'd, and when the Word comes closest to it, can't say as *Psal.* 141. 5 it is a kindness, and as an excellent oil, in my estimation; can't bless God for any thing that hinders thee from committing it, as *David*, 1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. *David* blessed God, yea *Abigail* as an instrument for preventing his shedding of Blood. If thou can't bless God for Affliction, when it keeps thee from sin, as *David* again, *Pf.* 119. 67, 71, 75. then it is no reigning sin.

II. A second Branch of the Exhortation bottomed on this Doctrine is, That having first found out which is your special iniquity (which I have largely insisted on, and is the first step to keeping your selves from your iniquity) then endeavour to cast it out of your Hearts and Lives. You must indeed endeavour to keep your selves from every sin, so as not to allow your selves in any: But you must above all keep your selves from, Believe, Pray and Watch against those sins, that you find your Hearts most strongly inclined to, and you are most frequently overcome by. All therefore that I shall further do, shall be to lay down some Motives to stir you up to, and some directions to help and guide you in, the performance of this duty of

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keeping your selves from your Iniquity. *Motives.*

1. Consider, This thy iniquity, if it be a reigning sin, it is at present, and (till thou be convinced of the evil of it, and made willing to part with it, to have it Killed and Crucified) is like to be, the great bar and hindrance of thy sound Conversion; this is the stumbling-block of your iniquity, that which breaks the match between your Souls and Christ, and will hinder your profiting by the Word, Prayer, or any other Duty and Ordinance. If there be in thee any darling *Delilah-Lust*, that thou layest in thy Bosom, it will hinder thee from closing with Christ till God break the League between thee and it: And when ever the Spirit of God works upon the Heart of a Sinner, in order to sound Conversion, he sets home this sin upon the Conscience, and that to purpose, and lets the Soul see the peculiar odious nature of it; God lays Gall and Wormwood on this pleasing breast, to wean the Heart from ever tampering with it allowedly and deliberately more, and when once the Heart is brought to be willing to part with this sin, and to have it Crucified, it will be an Evidence, that a good work is begun, yea in some good degree carried on in the Soul: But so long as any beloved Lust reigns in thee, thou art far from Conversion, and

and consequently from Salvation; for this is the Arch-Rebel against Christ, which must be brought down and slain before the face of Christ, if ever thou be converted here, or saved hereafter.

II. Oh keep your selves from your iniquity, for consider, if it be a reigning sin, this iniquity of all others will be a Worm at the Root of your Profession, of all your Gifts, Duties, and Performances, and Eat out the Heart of them, will hinder you from all truly Sanctifying and Saving Profit by them; tho' you by means of your Knowledge and professed Experience, and outwardly blameless Conversation, be duly admitted to Ordinances on the Ministers part, yet it will hinder you from all Real, Spiritual Communion with God in them, and true Scriptural Comfort from them.

Know it, whatever Profession of Religion you make, tho' never so high, whatever Gifts you are indowed with, or Duties you may perform, could you, if a Minister Preach never so well, if a private Christian Pray most enlargedly, and to appearance, most Affectionately, Confer and Speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels; yet if there be any beloved Lust, that you are not willing to forsake, and have mortified,

you will be but *as sounding Brass and a Tinkling Cymbal*; this sin, as was said before, will be a Worm at the root of all you do in Religion, it will be a flaw in your Profession, and in what you look upon as an Evidence of Grace.

*Judas* could Preach, Pray, and work Miracles no less than the other Apostles, but Covetousness was his beloved Lust, this lay at the bottom and spoiled all, so that he lost all his Labour, yea his Life and Soul into the sad Bargain; and so wilt thou, O Soul, if either Covetousness, Uncleaness, Drunkenness, Pride, Injustice, or any other sin whatsoever, be beloved by thee, or rule in thee. These thy iniquities will choak the Good Seed of the Word, and render it unfruitful, so that it will bring no fruit to perfection; they will set on thee in Prayer, and render all thy Prayers ineffectual: Oh, let this consideration excite you to endeavour to your utmost to keep your selves from your iniquity, from harbouring any beloved Lust, as you would get good by any Duty, or Ordinance of God.

Yea and you who are Believers, and Upright in the main, let this consideration excite, and prevail with you to put forth your most vigorous endeavours to keep your selves from your iniquities, which tho' not beloved

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ed Lusts, yet are too prevailing Corruptions in you; even these, tho' they may be lesser sins comparatively, and not so open and scandalous, *viz.* too much Worldliness, Pride, Passion, neglect of some Duties, or Formality in those you do perform, even Drowsiness, Wandrings in Duty, inward workings of Corruption, if you are often foiled by them, tho' if you Repent of them, and strive against them, they are not flaws in your Titles, yet they will be blots and blurs in your Evidences, that you will have much to do to read them; they will much hinder and interrupt your Communion with God in Holy Duties, and the settled Peace and Comfort of your Souls; they will hinder you from getting that good by Ordinances, the Word, Prayer, Sacraments and Communion of Saints, that you might do; they will hinder your boldness at the Throne of Grace, and cause you to drive heavily in Heavens-way; therefore Christians, as you would keep your Evidences clear, have Communion with God, and profit by Duties, keep your selves from your Iniquities, your too frequently prevailing Corruptions.

III. To stir you up to keep your selves from your Iniquity, from harbouring any one indulged, beloved, reigning sin; consider that

this your beloved Lust, is very likely to prove a Root of Apostasie to you; it is this that causes so many Professors to prove Apostates at last. Any one reigning sin is like a Leak in a Ship, which if it be not stoppt, or the Water pumped out, will certainly at last sink the Ship; so will any one sin whatsoever, that is not Repented of and Mortified, but indulged; this will indanger your falling off, and falling away after your most specious profession, and performances; this is the stumbling-block of your iniquity, either your Religion will cause you to leave your beloved Lusts, or they will be likely to make you leave your Religion and Duties, when your Lusts and these come in competition.

*Judas* held on a great way, and for a considerable time with the rest of the Apostles, but at last his Covetousness, which was his beloved Lust, betrayed him, and caused him to betray his and our Lord and Master. Therefore keep your selves from your Iniquities, lest you prove *Judas's*. And you that are Upright in the main, keep your selves from your too much and too frequently prevailing Corruptions, for these, tho' through Grace they shall not cause total Apostasie, yet they may cause, and you are in danger by them to be brought into, great decays of Grace.



IV. Keep your selves from your Iniquity, your beloved reigning sin, or sins; you that are yet in your Unconverted state, keep your selves from your most pleasing and profitable sins, for these are the sins, which if not Repented of, will most torment your Souls in Hell for ever: The Worm of Conscience will most gnaw upon your Souls to all Eternity, in the remembrance of these sins: By how much any sin has afforded more carnal pleasure or profit to you in the committing of it, so much it will cause your greater torment in your Consciences, here if they come to be awakened in time, or else for ever in Hell, *Rev. 18. 7.* how much she hath lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her. God will proportion and measure out your torments hereafter according to the measure of Delight you have taken in your sins, or the Worldly Profit and Advantage you have got by them; you who have taken pleasure in Uncleaness, Drunkenness, Tipling, Mispending your time among Unclean, Drinking, Gaming, Sabbath-profaning, Atheistical Scoffing, or any Loose Companions, these and such like sins, and such Companions will add to your Torments in Hell: They that were Unclean, Drunk and Jovially roared together here, shall burn and roar together out of extremity  
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of Torment hereafter. Conscience will say to thee, as *Abraham* in the Parable to the Rich Man, *Luk. 16. 25. Thou in thy life-time received'st thy good things, but now thou art tormented*: Therefore keep your selves from your Iniquity, indulge and be inflaved to it no longer, your formerly beloved reigning sins, so as to obey them in the Lusts thereof. And you that are Upright and True Believers, do you keep your selves from your most prevailing, tyrannizing corruptions, for tho' upon your renewing your Faith and Repentance, they shall not torment you in Hell, yet they are like to cause the greatest Wounds and Gashes in your Consciences here.

V. Keep your selves from your Iniquity, for consider, if you do not thus, but there be any beloved Lust, and reigning Sin harboured in your Hearts, and allowed of in your Conversations, you have cause to fear that such a Lust, which you will not forsake, will provoke God judicially to give you up to that Lust, yea to many other sins, the most vile Affections; to withdraw his restraining Grace, and give you up to your own Hearts Lusts, to the full swing of your Corruptions; and this is the most dreadful judgment a person can be given up to on  
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this side Hell, *Rom. 1. 24, 26, 28. 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12.* Them that had pleasure in Unrighteousness, God gave them up to strong delusions : And you that are in the main Upright, keep your selves from your Iniquities, which tho' they be not beloved Lusts, yet too often prevall over you, and are too much connived at, these may provoke God to leave you for a time to many sore and sad falls.

VI. Keep your selves from your iniquities, from every beloved lust, and reigning sin all of you who are yet unconverted; and you who are converted, and are Believers, keep your selves from your special Sins; those you are most prone too, and most frequently foiled by; for consider, these are the sins by which God is most dishonoured by you : Yea and your special Sins, that are Professors, yea true Believers, these are the sins that the men of the World will take occasion from, to reproach Religion. If you are foiled by Pride, or too much eagerness after the World, if you be guilty but of lesser Acts of Injustice or Intemperance, if you be of too airy Spirits, if you be often foiled by unruly Passions, rash Anger and fierce Expressions; for these things wicked men will reproach your Profession, and Religion it self, and so greatly dishonour God; they will be ready to say,

say, these are your Professors; they can be Proud, Covetous, Airy and Passionate, as well as their Neighbours; and though these be not allowed sins in you, but cost you strong cries and tears afterwards: Yet wicked Men do not or will not see this; they see your falls, but they see not the inward Pangs of grief and godly sorrow you feel for these; the sore conflicts and strugglings you feel in secret, on account of these sins after you have fallen into them; and so reproach you and Religion for them, counting that but a pretence, and you Hipocrites, which though it be their great sin so to do, yet it is your great Duty to watch, pray, believe and strive against these sins, and for the mortification of them, that you may cut off such occasions of wicked Mens dishonouring God, and reproaching Religion.

VII. Another Motive, which particularly concerns you who are sincere Believers, and should stir you up to keep your selves from your own iniquities, those which you do oftenest fall into, and though not reigning sins, yet are very domineering corruptions in you, is this, consider, these your iniquities, are the sins which of all other, will most weaken your graces, hinder the exercise of them, and growth in them, yea impair them, and cause decays in them; and these do and will most hinder your Spiritual comfort

comfort and joy in God. These, I say, will greatly weaken, the Graces of Gods Spirit in your hearts, and obstruct the actings of them, and your steady even walking with with God. Falls, you know, wound and weaken persons, cause sore Bruises, and often halting and lameness : So frequent falls into your special sins, will cause weakness in your Souls, in your Graces, and your Spiritual Limbs, and cause you that you cannot act so steadily and vigorously in the exercise of Grace, and Performance of Duties, but to halt, go lamely, and drive heavily in the ways of God. These your iniquities, if you do not keep your selves from them, will hinder your growth and progress in Grace and Holiness. These are like Suckers in Trees that draw the Juice and Sap from the Root to themselves ; as falls in Childhood hinder growth often times, so that such prove but dwarfs all their days : So frequent falls into these your iniquities, though comparatively but lesser sins, yet they may cause you to prove but dwarfs in Christianity. Yea these your special iniquities, if you do not keep your selves from them, will greatly impair Grace, cause decays and great back slidings ; the prevailing of these corruptions will keep Grace at a great under in the Soul ; and these are the sins, which, though through Grace they shall not ruine your Souls ; yet they are like greatly to hinder your comfort  
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and cause God to withdraw and hide his face, these are the great make-Bates between your Souls and God : do not you find and feel this by sad experience ? and how can it be otherwise ? for it is by these iniquities that you do most grieve the Spirit , and while you do so, how can you expect that he should seal and comfort you, and not rather grieve and wound your Souls, and write bitter things against you ? Therefore keep your selves from these your iniquities, as those which are your greatest Enemies, and would rob you both of Grace and Peace, quickening and comfort.

VIII. The last thing I shall mention to stir you up to keep your selves from your Iniquity, whether it be a reigning sin in the Unregenerate, or a tyrannizing one in the Regenerate, is this, consider, that it is this iniquity, or this kind of iniquities that will imbitter affliction to you, when you lye under it, and render Death and the Thoughts of it most unwelcome, yea dreadful to you. It is the guilt and prevalency of this sin above all others, that will put a Sting into Afflictions and into Death, and the Thoughts of it. This adds weight to the burden of Affliction, and makes it much more insupportable than otherwise it would be when Conscience shall upbraid thee, that this or that Affliction is the Punish-

Punishment of such a sin that thou hast indulged and cherished in thy bosom, or at least too much connived at. If you keep not your selves from these your peculiar sins, you will not be able to entertain your Afflictions patiently, and much less will you be able to bear them chearfully, as it becomes you to do: Nor will you be able to bear the Thoughts of Death comfortably, or indeed without dread and terror upon your Spirits, while you remain under the guilt and power of these your iniquities, tho' it should be only the tyrannizing and not the reigning power of them: As therefore you would bear Afflictions, and entertain Death and the Thoughts of it comfortably, labour after this proof of your sincerity, that you keep your selves from your iniquity.

And now having dispatched the Motives to excite you to look diligently to this great Duty, and great Evidence of sincerity, I proceed to close all with a few Particulars, to direct you to the Ways and Means of God's appointing in his Word, whereby you may be enabled through Grace to keep your selves from your iniquity.

*Directions.*

I. Would you keep your selves from your iniquities, either your reigning sins, or your too prevailing



prevailing corruptions; endeavour to get a deep and thorough sense and conviction of the great sin and evil of this thy special iniquity, how dishonourable it hath been, is, and will be, to God, and how greatly prejudicial to thee, thy Soul and Body too; and labour to keep this sense upon thy Spirit all thy days; so as to confess and bewail it before the Lord, and to be greatly humbled for it; this would be a means to keep you from it for the time to come, for hereby you will come to taste the bitterness, and feel the weight and burden of it. Therefore keep the evil of it constantly in the Eye of your Soul, that you may flee from it: Keep up a sense of the evil of that sin which was your most predominant reigning sin in your Unregenerate state, thus did *Paul*: Trusting in his Legal Pharisaical Righteousness, and a Persecuting Spirit were his special sins before his Conversion; and what a deep humble sense had he of them after his Conversion even all his days, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13, 15. *Phil.* 3. 7, 8, 9. He kept far from those sins for ever after: Confession and Humiliation are as it were the Souls Vomit, caused by its being sick of sin; now what hath made persons Heart-sick, they will not easily be persuaded to feed on again, tho' it may be pleasing to the Palat: No more will you taste of those

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(to the Flesh) sweet morsels of sin, which God by his Spirit and Grace hath made bitter to your Soul : But now if the sense of sins odiousness begins to wear off, you will be in danger to be again intangled with your old corruptions ; therefore as you would keep yourselves from your iniquities, keep a sense of the odiousness and bitterness of them upon your Hearts.

II. Be earnest and importunate in Prayer to God, as for Pardon of, so for Power against these thy special iniquities ; beg earnestly for special Grace and Strength against thy special sins. When thou hast found out, Indicted, and Accused this sin, at God's Tribunal, then cry out to God, as for Mercy to thee through Christ, so for Justice against thy sins, that God would kill them, and inable thee to mortifie and crucifie them ; drag these Traitors before God's Tribunal, and say, Lord, these are the Arch-Rebels against thy Crown, and Dignity, slay them before thy face. These are some of those Devils, or Devilish Lusts, that will not be cast out but by Prayer, yea by Fasting and Prayer : Do by these sins, as *Paul* did by the Messenger of Satan, *2 Cor. 12. 7, 8.* Ply the Throne of Grace, give God no rest till he return such a Gracious answer as he did to him,

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verse 9. *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.*

III. Would you keep your selves from your iniquity, then to your sense of, humiliation for, and Prayers against it, be sure, you that are Believers, to add Faith in Christ, and the lively vigorous actings of it upon him, as for the forgiveness of it, so for power against it, and for the sin killing vertue of the Death of Christ, to kill and crucifie this thy too prevailing corruption. Fetch in from Christ by Faith, constant supplies of spiritual strength against these sins of thine: You must have more strength than your own, more than the strength of Nature, of Reason, of your own Wills, Purposes, and Resolutions, yea than of Grace already received, to keep you from, and inable you to prevail against such strong corruptions as these are, they will be too strong for your Purposes, Duties, and Graces, if God do not strengthen you with strength in your Souls by his Spirit. It is God must keep you, you cannot keep your selves, *Psal. 127. 1. Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman watcheth but in vain.* So it will be in relation to your Souls, and the keeping them from sin. When *David* says in the Text, *I kept my self*, he doth not arrogate to himself, only  
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tells you what was his duty, and his care and endeavour to perform ; but he was sensible God only could keep him, which made him pray, as *Psal. 19. 11, 12. Cleanse me from my secret faults, and keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, and their dominion; and so from the great transgression. Dost thou, O Soul, feel thy iniquity stirring in thee, and prevailing over thee, if thou be yet in an unconverted state, pray that God would work Faith in thee ; and if thou art converted, stir up and act Faith on Christ ; pray earnestly to God to inable thee so to do ; lift up an Eye of Faith to Christ, and put forth an Hand of Faith to take hold on him, and fetch strength from him, and cry to him, when this sin sets upon thee, that he would make thee more than Conqueror over this thy iniquity.*

IV. Would you keep your selves from your particular iniquities, make use of the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God : Study, Apply and Improve the Word both Written and Preached against your most strong and prevailing corruptions : Improve the Word in all the parts of it, its Precepts, Prohibitions, Threatnings, Promises, Examples and Experiences recorded in it, against thy particular corruptions, whatever you read

or hear in, and from the Word of God, against sin in general, apply it against thy iniquity in particular, as if it were named.

Is thy iniquity, an Omission; living in the neglect of any commanded duty, publick, family or secret, toward God, or of any duty of Justice or Charity toward Man, or of Sobriety toward thy self? muster up the Holy Precepts of God, and turn the edge of them against thy sin, mingling them with Faith and Prayer: Say, how shall I dare to live in the neglect of these duties which God so expressly enjoyns in his Word.

Is thy iniquity a sin of Commission; then apply and turn the edge of the Prohibitions of the Word against that sin of thine, say to thy Soul, how shall I dare to do that which God so expressly forbids, and which his Soul hates? Make use of the Threatnings of Gods Word against thy sin in particular, against thy Pride, Passion, Covetousness, Uncleanness, Drunkenness, Deceit, or any other sin. And apply the Promises of Power against sin in general, or particular against thy sins, such as, *Mic. 7. 19. Rom. 6. 14. Ezech. 36. 25, 26, 27.* improve them to cleanse thee from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, *2 Cor. 7. 1. 2 Pet. 1. 4.* And also improve the Examples of Saints falling into sin, and

and recovering out of it, to make thee watchful, against falls, and quicken and forward thy recovery, when overtaken and fallen.

V. Would you keep your selves from your iniquity, then be jealous of, and over your own Hearts, and be very Watchful against that iniquity of yours you find your selves most prone to, and against all occasions of it; cut off from it all provisions, all that would feed and fulfil these Lusts, *Rom. 13. 14.* cut sin short; starve these sins of thine, do not pamper them; deny thy self in what ever tends to feed thy sin; take heed of that company which thou findest is likely to draw thee into thy peculiar iniquity: Deny thy self in things in themselves lawful, that are not necessary, that thou findest apt to insnare thee, and lead thee to thy special sin. I say, things lawful, that are not necessary, you must in such a case, forbear the use of: But you must not forbear the use of such things as are necessary, as Food, and Physick, for fear they should prove occasions of sin; but you must be watchful in the use of them.

Much less must you forbear what is your duty to God, or Men, because you may be in danger to be proud, or rest in duties; nor must



must you decline serving God in your Generation, as he gives you a call and opportunity to be serviceable to him, the Church, the World, and civil Societies; but you must double your Diligence and Watch, and Guard against the sins that are apt to cleave to your Duties, and against the Temptations that are apt to beset you in the Places, Employments, Relations, or Company you may be called to.

VI. Would you keep your selves from your most powerful and prevailing iniquity, you who have a work and principle of Grace wrought in you by the Spirit of God, labour to grow most of all in, and most to exercise that Grace which is most directly contrary to that sin thou art most prone to, and most easily and frequently foiled by; for contraries do best and most effectually expel each other; thus Oppression was *Zabab's* sin, and he kept himself from this his iniquity, by performing the duty, and exemplifying the Grace directly contrary to this sin, namely, making restitution, and exercising mercy, bounty and liberality, giving the half of his Goods to the Poor, *Luk. 19. 8.* Cruelty was the Jailors Sin; but when converted, he keeps himself from this his iniquity, by exercising the Graces most opposite



site to this sin, namely, courtesie and kindness to *Paul* and *Silas*, Acts 16. 24, 33, 34. Oh what a different carriage was here! So *Paul* before his Conversion was a most bitter and cruel Persecutor of Christians, and the Christian Religion, but when Converted, who more eminent than he, in Preaching the Gospel, and suffering for it; Go, and do thou likewise. Hath Covetousness, Strait-heartedness, and pinching from Pious and Charitable uses, been your predominant iniquity, and would you keep your selves from it? Resolve then in God's strength to cross this Covetous temper, and exercise the contrary Duty and Grace of Liberality and Heavenly-mindedness.

Is Pride in Apparel, or in any other way, whether of Heart or Life, your Sin? To keep you from this your iniquity, resolve to lay aside all the Badges of Pride, and in an especial manner set your selves to exercise the Grace of Humility, to be cloathed with it both in the inward and outward Man. Hath Passion, rash Anger, bitter and fierce Expressions in your Passion been your sin, and would you keep your selves from it? Then set your selves in the strength of Christ to the exercise of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, and calmness in Speech and Behaviour. Hath Intemperance, or Unchastity been  
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your sin? To keep you from this, Exercise exact Temperance in Meat, Drink, Sleep, Apparel and Recreations, and Chastity in Heart, Speech, and your whole Carriage; and by the diligent and believing use of these means, and following these Directions, you may come to keep your selves from your iniquities, and thereby evidence your being upright before the Lord.

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